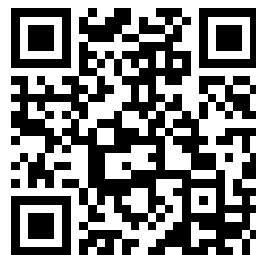


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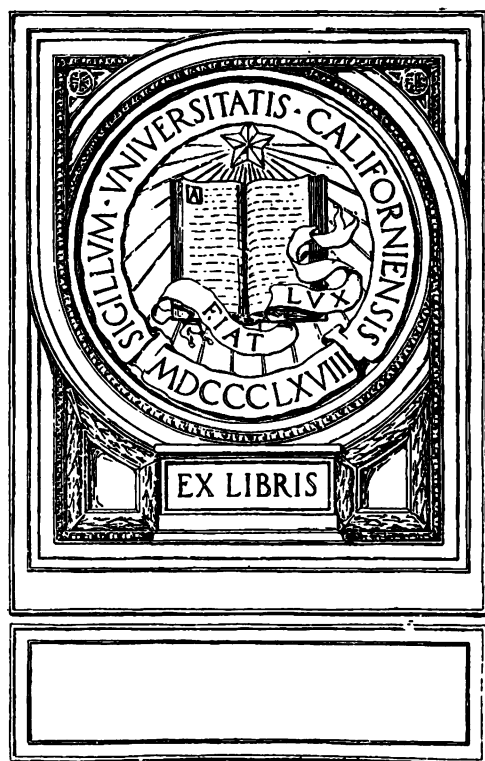


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WITH THE GUNS  
WEST AND EAST

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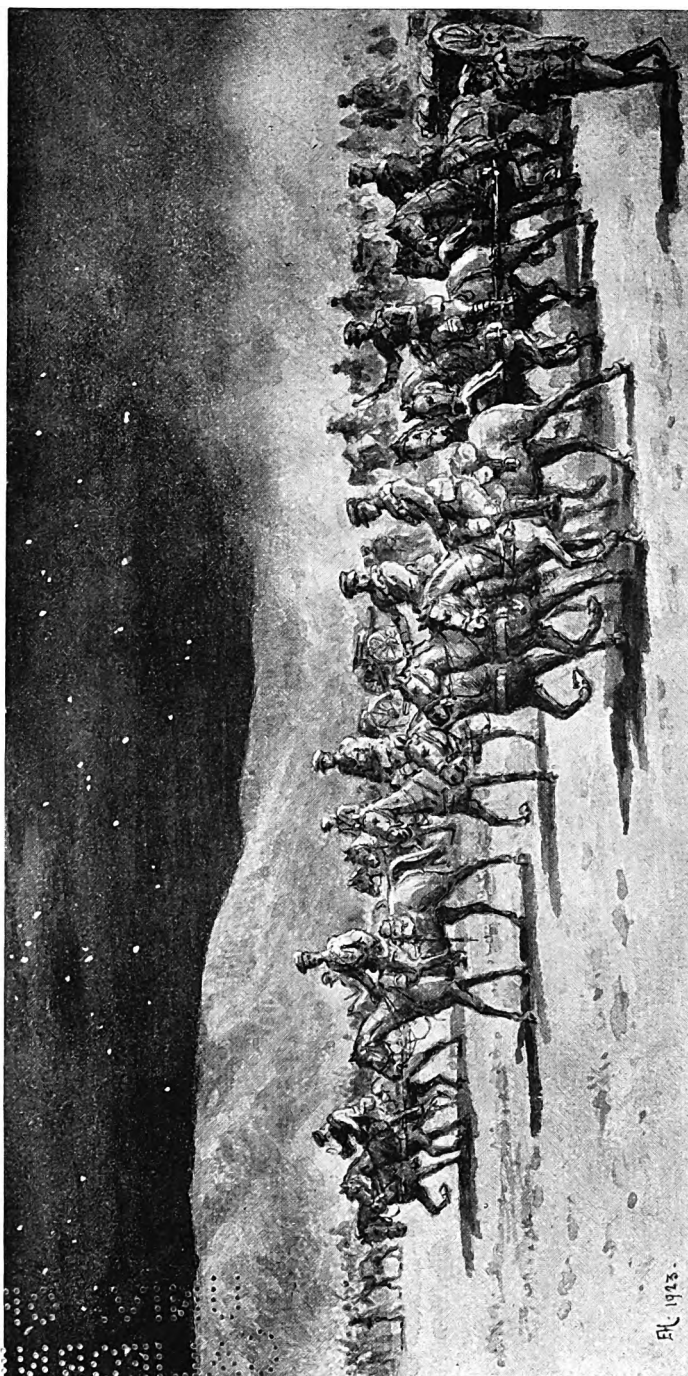
**WITH THE GUNS  
WEST AND EAST**



*This edition, printed and made in England,  
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Univ. of  
California





AS THE GUNS APPROACHED IN LINE THE SUSPECTING TURK COMMENCED RIFLE FIRING

# WITH THE GUNS WEST AND EAST

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

BY  
"ARNEWOOD"

*Illustrated by* LT.-COL. E. A. HOBDAV, C.M.G.  
*(and two sketches by* L. RAVEN HILL)

"Come the three corners of the world in arms,  
And we shall shock them : Naught shall make us rue,  
If England to itself do rest but true."

SHAKESPEARE.





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## SOUVENIR



RECEIVED a few days ago a letter from a small French child, which is an echo of the dark winter days of 1914 in France.

In November, 1914, the 5th Royal Horse Artillery Brigade—the brigade with which I went out to France—was in action close by Laventie. The armies had only recently settled into trench warfare.

Our Colonel—Uniacke, now a Major-General—volunteered to assist our infantry as far as possible in repairing and digging trenches which had suffered severely from floods. It was our task, therefore, to go down in the winter nights with working parties and reconstruct these trenches and build redoubts, etc. Not a pleasant job.

Owing to the proximity of enemy trenches, in places about a hundred yards apart, it was possible only to work at night.

I shall never forget those nights.

Turning out in the bitter cold, crossing the open fields where so far no communication trenches were dug. Then a little further on, beyond the Rue Tilloy, wading over one's knees in the icy slush. All the time the sniper's rifle with its splitting report firing occasional rounds as we filed across the meadows in the ghostly moonlight.

A four-hour task, and all the time the sniper's gun was busy; and sometimes a machine gun or a small field gun would be laid in our direction, and we would all throw ourselves down in the squelching mud with the bullets shrieking by.

And a man would sink down in the midst of his work where a shot found its billet.

Always on these nights my way led me through the village of Laventie, then practically deserted, with shattered homes exposing their household goods, where whole sides of rooms were blown away; babies' cots and children's toys mixed up in the dismal mêlée.

One family remained on, however, at the northern end of the little

village. It was Leroy's duty to keep the level-crossing clear when a train was rushed through about once in ten days to Armentières.

Leroy, this railway official, was obliged to remain on at Laventie, where eleven-inch shells tore through roofs and shrieked overhead like an express engine.

The letter I received last week was from Leroy's little daughter. She had remained on in the tiny house at the level-crossing indifferent to the danger. This brave little fair-haired child—whenever I passed through that way I would hear her merry "Bon jour, Monsieur," and an invitation to come in out of the cold for a cup of coffee.

I remember one night when I said I must be going on she seemed to realize the meaning of those trenches from which so many had been carried back past her little home, and the childish hands clung to me and there were tears in her eyes.

Many a time when I went into the small room warmed by a big stove, with the good smell of coffee, I found also in the room a lance-corporal of the "Kensingtons." One could not help noticing the good breeding of this fine fellow.

He used to sit quietly by the stove saying scarcely a word, with such a kindly look in his blue eyes. And always his pleasing face lit up when the child spoke to him in her pretty French patois.

Sometimes he would look very white and worn. Everyone knows of the deeds done in those trying days by the gallant "Kensingtons" that first cold winter.

Two years went by, and by chance, riding within a few miles of Laventie, I turned my horse to call in and see if my little girl friend was all right.

Sure enough there she was, grown taller, still with the bright smile. We chatted together, and I asked her what had become of the soldier who, like me, had so appreciated the warmth of that hospitable little house. And so it was I was told that the day came when he never returned from the trenches, and there in a corner was a small basket he had always carried and had never again come back for.

The little letter read as follows :—

"Soyez bien certain cher ami que je ne vous oublierai pas dans mes prières ; chaque jour je demanderai à Dieu pour qu'il vous conserve toujours en très bonne santé.

"Au sujet de la situation je ne puis vous dire qu'il tombe un peu



WHEN THE CHILD SPOKE TO HIM IN HER PRETTY FRENCH PATOIS.

TO THE  
LIBRARY

plus souvent des obus mais la moitié des obus qu'ils lancent ne font pas explosion ; bombardes nous le serons toujours car les sales boches ne bougent pas.

“ Je suis toujours en bonne santé ainsi que mes parents, etc.

“ Une petite fille qui pense toujours à vous et qui vous restera dévouée. A vous de cœur.”

About Xmas time, 1914, I was given two days' leave to visit my brother at St. Omer, who, having recovered from wounds received whilst fighting on the Marne, had been installed for some weeks at G.H.Q. as A.A.G. to General Macready, the Adjutant-General.

I took this opportunity of looking up a very dear friend of mine, Lyon Playfair, who had served with me before the War during two of, perhaps, the happiest years of soldiering I ever spent ; and this owing to the delightful comradeship of this boy who was much younger than myself.

Lyon Playfair, the only son of Lord Playfair, an old artilleryman, possessed that charm of manner which is difficult to define ; the humble, unselfish nature added to a clear-thinking brain, which endears itself to officers and men alike.

In the hunting field he was as fearless as he proved to be fighting in France.

Subconsciously he exercised an influence for good amongst us all which none of us will ever forget, and which he in his simplicity and dislike for the sentimental would be the last to own to.

I was not destined to see his cheery face that day or ever again. I discovered his quarters out there at Ploegsteert, but he was away observing fire, and although I waited as long as I dare with the Adjutant-General's precious car under shell-fire, I was obliged to move on without seeing him.

On April 21st, 1915, Lyon Playfair was killed at Ypres.

On the tablet erected to his dear memory in a little church in Suffolk I read the other day the following :—

It said : “ From a letter written by one of his men.” “ A finer Officer or better gentleman it would be hard to find.” Humbly and truly expressed.





# WITH THE GUNS WEST AND EAST

## PART I

LOOS, 1915

" . . . Bid us remember then what bloody sweat,  
What thorns, what agony  
Purchased our wreaths of harvest and ripe ears."

### PREPARATIONS FOR THE BATTLE

**B**RIOR to the battle my battery was in Vermelles. The gun emplacements were arranged in buildings, for the most part, immediately behind a low railway embankment. By sinking the guns so that the muzzles were on a level with the ground, and by fixing up artificial screens, etc., the flash of the guns was so concealed that for three weeks the position was never given away. The position was a particularly advantageous one, in that it was possible to observe the fire from a ruined house situated in front of the railway within forty yards to right front of No. 1 gun.

The detachments lived in cellars adjoining the gun pits; each gun emplacement was a fortress in itself, sand-bagged and splinter-proofed by iron girders and steel plates secured from the neighbouring mine-head.

At first we officers lived in a house within thirty yards of No. 1 gun. The row of small houses which constituted the position of the battery consisted of two-storied cottages, the roofs and walls mostly shelled in. However, the house we chose for the Officers' Mess was in good condition. The owners were a miner, his wife and daughter; the last cooked for us.

We were received with open arms. The old lady had herself been severely wounded in the head and foot by a shell ; the foot was now merely a stump. The daughter had been blown downstairs and turned upside down by a shell. Nevertheless, this sturdy family insisted on remaining bang up in front until obliged to evacuate by the French authorities about three weeks later, 18th September.

In the course of a few days we had completed a dug-out which consisted of a room boarded in, papered and fitted out with electric light, four and a half feet below a metalled road. The size of the room was fourteen feet long, nine feet across and six feet in height. A passage was tunnelled under the railway to lead to this dug-out, and an exit on the opposite side of it led to a cellar of the house which comprised the O.P. (Observation Post).

The O.P. was thoroughly strengthened and I was given the assistance of 300 to 400 infantrymen to complete the task of converting the O.P. into a stronghold.

Observation of fire was made through a hole in the wall, and a fair view of the plain to the east and the Hun trenches was obtained.

Many hours were spent during this period in visiting the infantry trenches and in perfecting telephonic communication between guns and infantry.

We had received orders to cut the barbed wire with gun fire in front of the German front line trenches and to commence a bombardment on the 21st September, a bombardment which was to last four days preparatory to an attack. Our orders were to ensure a passage being cut through the wire to enable our infantry to pass through on the day of the attack, also to prevent him mending it. One gun only was used for this purpose. Firing continued for four days and lasted eight hours each day. At this time the remainder of the battery was firing day and night at the rate of about 800 rounds a day.

On the second day of the bombardment the progress made by the wire-cutting gun had been so satisfactory that our task was considered sufficiently completed. Great gaps were made in the thick wire surrounding a sap, and posts and *chevaux de frises* were sent sky-high. The infantry expressed themselves satisfied, and their judgment proved later on to be not at fault, as the attacking infantry three days later passed straight through the wire without a stop.

Arthur Radcliffe, my senior subaltern, assisted me in observation of fire during all this time from a position in the infantry trenches about



AS HE VANISHED IN THE SMOKE HE WAVED A FLAG OVER HIS HEAD.

TO VIND  
ABROCHADO



300 yards from the Hun trenches. On one occasion, whilst we were assisting the Division, what was called a "Chinese attack" took place. This was an attack by rifle fire and shell fire by our own Division on the German trenches opposite, of which no warning had been given us by our own Brigade Staff, with the result that there was very nearly a disaster for Radcliffe, myself and our three telephonists. The Germans retaliated.

All of a sudden an intense rifle fire took place to our immediate front, and the observation post was pitted with bullets. The iron plate holding the telescope through which I was observing was struck, and the whole place sang with bullets and pip-squeaks. I hurried my party into a dug-out built of sand-bags and heavy beams. We had scarcely got inside before three shells hit the base of the dug-out, a fourth shell burst on the roof, smashed in the roof of beams, and hurtled into the middle of us. Curiously enough no one was touched, although there were five of us in the tiny place of refuge about ten feet square.

The objectives allotted to the 15th Highland Division were the German front line trenches and second line trenches with their right on Loos Cemetery inclusive, Loos village, and Hill 70.

The assault was delivered by the 44th and 46th Infantry Brigades in four columns, two from each Brigade, each column consisting of one battalion. The 44th were responsible for the front and support trenches, the second line trench, Loos village and *Puit* 15. The 46th were to attack on the right of the 44th Brigade. The 47th and 1st Divisions were to carry out a simultaneous attack on our right and left respectively.

### THE BATTLE

On the 25th of September, the morning of the attack on Loos, we bombarded with very heavy shelling from 5.50 a.m. until 7.5 a.m., at which hour our infantry, the gallant 44th and 46th Brigades, were to advance.

The scene at 7 o'clock, just before the actual infantry attack, was weird in the extreme. In front one saw the open grass plain, intersected with white chalk trench lines, and beyond, in the early morning light, huge volumes of dense smoke were rising all along the line of trenches, while the red fire of bursting shells could be seen in all directions; the roar of hundreds of guns had been terrific, and now there was almost silence. All at once through the thick smoke we saw one solitary figure rise up on to the parapet. For many seconds this officer stood up alone, then as he

vanished in the smoke he waved a flag over his head, and immediately the whole line of trenches was alive with human forms silhouetted against the dense background. The Highland Brigade was advancing. Just then, as an H.E. shell came smashing through the roof above us, and buried itself in the thick layer of sand-bags in the room, we lifted the fire of our guns over the heads of the infantry. Soon after this we ceased fire, as directed, and waited impatiently for our next orders. At 8 a.m. I telephoned through to ask if I could ride out and reconnoitre ahead for a position for the guns. I was told not to. Not until 5.30 that evening did we receive orders to advance.

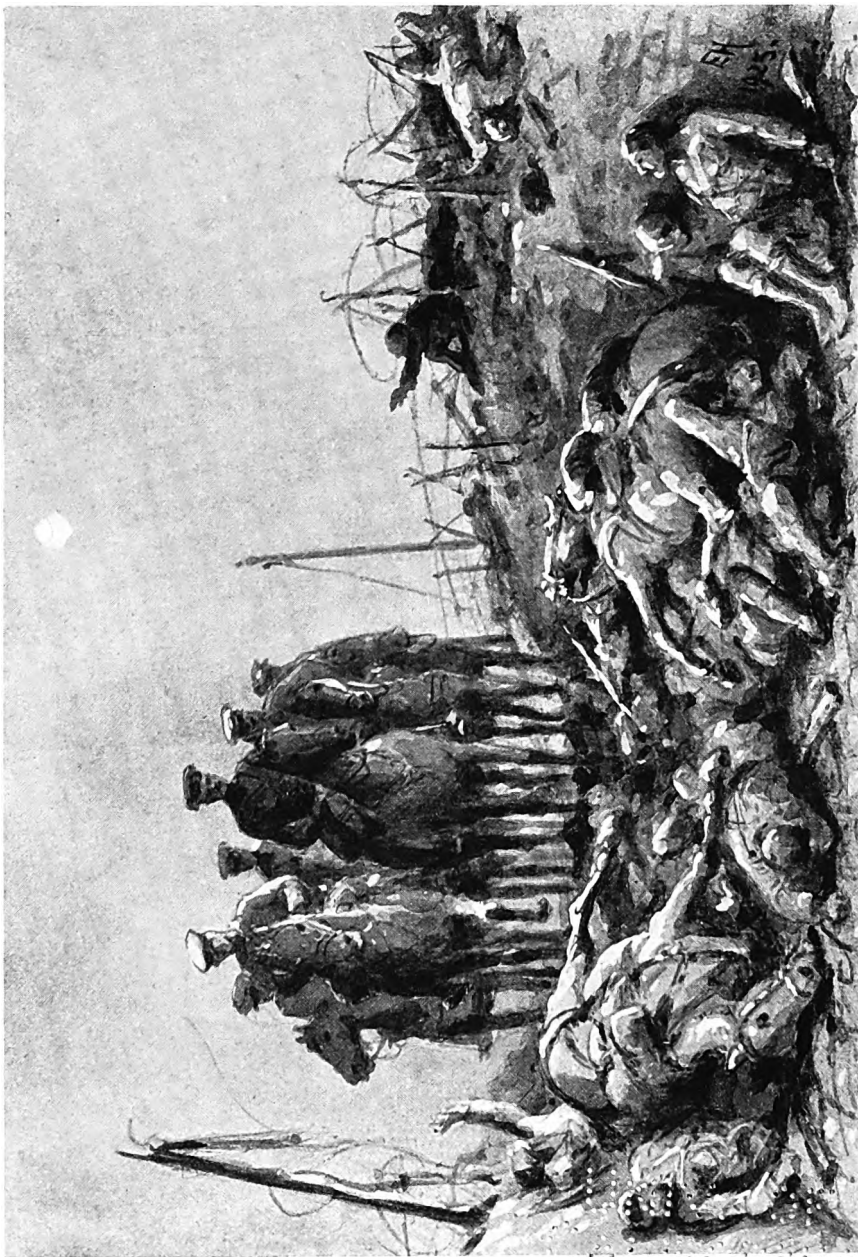
The 6th Cavalry Brigade came up, and their General (Campbell) and several of the officers, Cavalry and R.H.A., came in and refreshed themselves at our house. They were impatient, like ourselves, to push on. At 5.30 p.m. I received orders to reconnoitre a position about a mile ahead, to the south of some guns already in action. Radcliffe and I, a sergeant, the director man and three orderlies rode out. It was getting dark and raining pretty heavily. We groped our way through the remains of barbed wire and through the dead and wounded. The stretcher work had been very heavy. We passed many wounded who had been propped up, their legs strapped together. The sights and sounds were very heart-rending.

The position for the guns was chosen and a possible O.P. half a mile ahead in the now deserted German trench.

An orderly discovered me in the half-light and informed me that the O.C. Brigade had been looking for me. After much difficulty we found this officer in a dug-out in the trenches. I was informed that the message I had received earlier in the evening from the Adjutant was incorrect, and that I now had orders to go forward and select a position in the folds of the ground north of Loos.

To find a position for a battery in the dark in totally unknown country (a position which must be under cover) was, to say the least of it, no easy matter. No reconnaissance of any description had been made by the artillery in this direction.

With some difficulty we found our horses and reached the Lens-Bethune road. Here the scene was indescribable: chaos reigned everywhere. Transport and ammunition wagons stood at right angles to the road, horses and mules faced in every direction, the result being that the whole road was a solid block of men and horses, mules and carts of every description. There was no Staff Officer at this time to direct the traffic.



TWELVE DEAD FELLOWS LYING NEAR TWO STRETCHED-OUT HORSES.

TO VIND  
ALPHABETIC

A little further up dead horses and mules lying across the road increased the obstruction. After great difficulties my party worked their way through and beyond the crowded road. We had left all signs of life behind, and only just ahead through the moonlight we heard the whistle of rifle bullets and occasionally the burst of shrapnel. A sharp turning to the left led us along an open, narrow road. Suddenly we pulled up. On the road, huddled up, were twelve dead fellows lying near two stretched-out horses. And everywhere to right and left one heard the moaning of the dying, crying for stretcher bearers and water. I halted the party, and told them to wait until I returned. It seemed inconceivable that guns could come up as far, as rifle fire sounded just ahead. I walked on up the road until I came to the buildings on the outskirts of Loos. I knew that my orders were to select a position, if possible the other side of Loos to where we were at that moment, and that there was nothing for it but to go on. I returned to my party, mounted, and we rode on.

We dismounted at the north-west corner of Loos, and left our horses and horse-holders under some houses, a few yards from the cemetery. In a very short time, with the help of the bright moon, I was perfectly satisfied that the hiding of the guns in a fold of the ground was an impossibility and that no convenient fold existed. I instructed Radcliffe to return to Brigade Headquarters and explain the position of affairs. I then made a further reconnaissance on foot with the sergeant. During all this time, as we were walking across the open grass, we were being sniped from the direction of where our horses had been left. Presently the shelling became so bad that we were obliged to take cover in a trench. Then the shelling on the cemetery and on the house (under the walls of which our horses and men were sheltering) became terrific. We did not expect to see our men and horses again.

This is what had happened during the time I had left the horses to further reconnoitre the position. My horse-holders had noticed the sniping. They perceived that it came from the direction of the very house under which they stood. Further, they noticed that the fire was directed on my sergeant and myself. Then a shell burst immediately on the house. At once a Hun carrying a rifle dropped out of a window above, almost on to my little party. Corporal Oakhill (the director man) and Driver Smith (my own horse-holder) seized upon the man and cuffed him across the head. The terrified German pointed distractedly at the house and cried out for mercy, and said that there were



more men in the house. My two men, both of whom were unarmed, then told him to lead the way and show them where the others were. They called to the Germans to come out. Out trooped fourteen fellows holding up their hands. Oakhill signalled to some infantry reliefs who were by now beginning to come up to Loos. With the help of these men thirty or forty Huns were captured, rifles and all, and led away.

Soon after this Radcliffe, whom I had sent back to assist in bringing up the battery, returned. I then left him to carry on as best he could, and, taking with me Corporal Oakhill, started off on foot in search of the infantry front-line trench, from which I proposed to observe fire for the guns. The walk through Loos was none too healthy. The village was full of Germans, who had been overlooked by our infantry in their hurried advance, and as we walked up the village street sniping continued from house windows.

Eventually we issued from the east side of Loos and began to ascend Hill 70, which lay due east of the village. We found ourselves walking in the open between our infantry second-line trench and front trench. We were between two fires, and a couple of men immediately in front of me were shot down. Finding this too hot a corner I led the way slantwise up the hill, bearing towards what turned out to be the slag heap. Oakhill and I crossed the railway at the foot of the slag heap; we found a small dug-out in the bank, where the Colonel of the — Regiment was resting. He told me there was no position from which I could observe artillery fire for more than a distance of forty or fifty yards ahead, which was a fact.

I then climbed to the top of the slag heap and ducked down into the shallow trench. It was by this time about 4 a.m. Oakhill was to return to the position of the guns and guide the telephonists up to where I was.

This is the position I found myself in. The front-line trench which our infantry held at this time was three-quarters of the way up Hill 70. It extended on the left in the open grass, curved round to the right until it reached the railway, continuing the other side of the railway with a shallow trench dug in the coal dust on the top of the slag heap. On the slag heap the British and German trenches were between thirty and forty yards apart. At each side of it a laurel hedge led from the German trench to ours, along which the Germans endeavoured several times to creep, but machine guns well posted shot them down as they appeared. We kept up a rifle fire for the next few hours, and as a Hun head appeared I



A HUN CARRYING A RIFLE DROPPED OUT OF A WINDOW ABOVE.

70 .vml  
A000000000

assisted with my revolver until, overcome with fatigue, I fell asleep with my arm on the low parapet in front, my weapon at full cock.

At about 6 a.m. (September 26th) Oakhill returned with two telephonists to report that communication by telephone was established. We found a small shelter in the bank of the slag heap a short distance in front of our infantry front line, and here the telephone party remained. This point was situated between our front line and the Germans—a somewhat curious position. Very soon after this the telephone wire was cut. Gunner Ellis then went down in the open to endeavour to mend it. At 8 a.m. preparations for a further attack to straighten out our line were to begin.

Just previous to this I resolved to go back to the battery, my means of communication with it having been severed. All at once the Germans began shelling our trench: the trench was so shallow that we were obliged to lie one on top of the other to gain shelter. The shells dropped nearer and nearer, fired from a very short range. It was impossible to observe, or to see anything from our trench, beyond a distance of about fifty yards up the slope.

The Colonel of the ——— had asked me to get into touch with the heavy artillery observing officer. I got out of the trench and started down the hill. Just then the ——— Division, who were to make the attack, issued from the east road of Loos. At once they were subjected to a withering fire. Three times while I looked on, these troops, fresh from England, dead-beat and unfed, broke back.

I walked through them, never expecting to reach the houses of Loos, through a rain of bullets.

As I came up to the houses I could see the brick-dust shivering on the red brick walls as the machine gun bullets struck them. Behind a wall I discovered two officers, and in a house a little further along I saw a gunner officer, but they could not tell me the whereabouts of the heavy artillery officer. They told me it was just possible that he had been up in the Tower Bridge, but nothing living could be up there then as they were shelling the towers to hell.

I then decided to get back to my guns. For a short distance I worked my way through holes in the walls of houses which the Gordons had made in their advance (the work of the Highlanders was excellent and thorough all through). When I got into the street the scene was very terrible. Shells were bursting in every direction here; the way was simply strewn

with dead. Luckily I took a wrong turning or I could never have succeeded in reaching my battery. Presently I arrived at the cemetery ; a machine gun was playing on the road I had left, and as I emerged on the other side of the cemetery the machine gun followed me up, the bullets hissing all round me. I lay down in the grass. It is possible I was seen to fall ; at all events the fire slackened, then I looked up and saw my guns two hundred yards away and ran towards them. It was a great relief when I saw my men wave to me. I was very exhausted.

On reaching the battery I at once took charge. Up to this time (10.10 a.m.) the guns had had instructions to fire by time-table (in case our means of communication were cut off), and were shelling the woods to the north of Hill 70.

I at once got all guns laid on to the summit of Hill 70. Just then an orderly from the infantry rushed up with a message to ask us to fire immediately on the very place on which we had just commenced to fire—the Germans were massing just over the crest of the hill.

For one and a half hours a steady rate of fire was kept up with H.E. and shrapnel on the reverse slopes ; the laying was excellent, and I cannot speak too highly of the discipline at the guns during this critical time. No excitement prevailed ; the subalterns, N.C.O.'s and men were going about their different jobs quietly and quickly under a perfect hail of shell. Three or four German batteries had concentrated their fire on us and a machine gun enfiladed us on the right. Splinters were flying everywhere and shells poured down each side of the battery.

The position of the battery was this. The guns had been placed close by Fort Glatz on the open grass, just behind a German trench. There were some small straw stacks near this spot and the guns had been rigged up in straw before daylight to resemble the stacks. The position was about five hundred yards in the rear of our infantry trenches on the north-west edge of Loos, at the bottom of the grass slope which ran down to the village. Behind us again there was *no other infantry* for a distance of nearly three miles.

Although later on our guns were spotted out there in the open, there is no doubt that for a time the disguise thoroughly deceived the wily Hun. Observation was made from behind the limber of No. 2 gun. The shrieking of shells overhead and the noise of the guns firing made the passage of orders difficult, but the firing never stopped until 12.30 a.m., when all ammunition was expended. Two orderlies had been sent to en-



I FELL ASLEEP WITH MY ARM ON THE LOW PARAPET.



70 .VINU  
ANBOLUAO

deavour to get up more ammunition. At about 9 a.m. Radcliffe volunteered to walk back a mile and a quarter across the open—a perilous walk, as the whole hill-side and plain beyond were under shell fire. He arrived at Brigade Headquarters, but was unable to obtain any assistance. The Artillery Brigade Commander was completely out of touch with his forward guns and could suggest no means for a supply of ammunition.

The Highlanders of the 15th Division carried yellow flags to mark their progress, and these flags marked the trenches as they were captured. Although this method of indicating the most forward position captured by our men is not altogether satisfactory as a rule, I am bound to say it worked admirably at Loos as far as my battery was concerned : there was no mistaking the exact position of our infantry.

During the morning and early afternoon the new reinforcements were unable to face the very severe fire opposite Hill 70. Although many rallied, for the most part the troops fresh out from England, suddenly plunged after a long exhausting march straight into one of the fiercest battles of the war, turned and fled. They streamed back on each side of the guns. A Staff Officer (the first one we had seen since our arrival at Loos) rushed out from a trench shouting to me, "For God's sake fire on the Germans coming down the hill!" but I had been watching very closely, so I answered him, "No, most certainly not; they are your own men." Wounded men came through us and told us how effective our fire had been on the hill, that it had prevented the Germans from massing, and had fairly bowled them over. As our battery was the only one firing at the time, we were naturally immensely gratified. The shelling on our guns was so heavy that as soon as we had expended all the ammunition I ordered the men to get into the trench about twenty yards in front of the guns. Only one man had been shot through the hand by the machine gun all this time. And when it is considered that three or four German batteries had concentrated fire on these four British guns in action in the open, it would appear that we were indeed favoured by the gods that day.

At about 4 p.m. it seemed that a general retirement was taking place. One of the officers handed me my revolver; this was a very trying moment. All the morning we had been in extreme danger of being captured. I ordered the men to take out breech-blocks and take up their kits. Just after this I received an order from O.C. Brigade to retire the guns to Fosse 8. This order showed complete ignorance of the state of the one road available. No horses could have been brought up in daylight,

nor were horses permitted to pass that way, so that the guns could not be moved until night. I ordered Thompson, the second subaltern, to take the men back to the wagon line in extended order. After we had walked a part of the way up the slope in rear, Radcliffe and I turned back, so as to remain as guard over the guns. The whole hill-side was pitted with "coal-box" shells which followed my men up the hill. Radcliffe and I felt very lonely. When it became dark Hun snipers began sniping at us from behind, which was extremely disagreeable. At 8.30 p.m., when shell fire slackened, the teams came up, and right glad we were to hear them on the Loos road.

Lieut. Thompson and Lieut. Denniston successfully pulled the guns out of action without a casualty.

The attack by the Highland Brigades of the 15th Division on the previous day will be a matter of history. Nothing finer or more magnificent can be imagined in the annals of war than the charge of these Jocks as they rushed full tilt into Loos, and beyond, actually entrenching themselves on the far side of Hill 70. I saw many dead and wounded, hundreds of them, and in every case one realized with what grim determination the old Jocks had charged on. Round my guns fifteen silent forms lay stretched, the officer in front, with his arm outflung and revolver pointed. Behind him one of his men, in the act of taking aim, his finger about to press the trigger, had been pierced through the forehead by a bullet. Further back still a Cameron Highlander lay full length on a Hun, gripping him by the throat. These Highlanders are equal to the finest and most highly trained troops in our service.

And so when the last gun had been dragged safely out of that place of death and our vigil was over, Radcliffe and I trudged wearily up the hill in the dark across the battle-strewn, battered stretch of country under the merciful cover of night.

The guns were to return to the wagon line close by our old billets, which were now occupied by the Welsh Guards.

As the Guards' officers had taken possession of our lately vacated rooms we felt homeless, and wondered how and where we could rest and feed that night. We were desperately tired and ravenous.

Arrived at the billet, we were met by the Adjutant of the Welsh Guards. He welcomed us back, much to our surprise and relief, and informed us that his Colonel insisted that we should come in and partake of food.

Furthermore, he insisted on our resting that night in our old rooms,



ROUND MY GUNS FIFTEEN SILENT FORMS LAY STRETCHED.  
(Sketch by L. Raven Hill).

ARMY OF  
CALIFORNIA

TO VIND  
AMERICAN

turning his own officers out to share other rooms in order that we might enjoy his hospitality to the full.

How we blessed the C.O. for his kindly consideration ! Then, before we knew where we were, we found ourselves surrounded by these good fellows.

I remember the dazed feeling I had when dragged out of the dark night into the lighted room full of these cheery young officers, who forced priceless food (fresh from " Fortnum and Mason ") down our throats, and listening to the pleasant voice of Colonel Murray-Threipland.

Next day these brave fellows—veterans some of them—were to lead the Welsh Guards into their first battle as a regiment.

Needless to say they distinguished themselves and added still more glory to the glorious Guards' record.

I always remembered that night, it was out of hell into heaven for us two.

And so ended the first phase of the battle of Loos.

Yesterday, in the early morning, how cheered and victorious we had felt ! This elaborately planned forward move, this huge offensive which had taken weeks and weeks to mature, whose object lay in capturing the high ground beyond Loos and forming a wedge in this direction to ultimately break through the German line, had triumphed so far.

Everyone had reason to rejoice at the magnificent success of the Highlanders, who had achieved the task allotted them by capturing Loos and Hill 70 redoubt beyond it, which was the key of the position.

I remember at 8 a.m. dancing with joy at the successful turn of events.

Major A. Campbell and his Highlanders were in occupation of the redoubt and the forward trenches on Hill 70.

Therefore up to that point everything had been achieved by 9 a.m. on the morning of the 25th September. But those trenches which had been so gallantly taken by the fury and impetus of the 45th Highland Brigade were being desperately held.

When were reinforcements coming ?

A small number of Highlanders actually advanced beyond these trenches, but coming under withering machine gun fire, which swept them from the windows of houses in the outskirts of Cité St. Auguste, the few survivors were obliged to retire to the already occupied trenches in front of the redoubt.

Our batteries, straining at the leash to push on and help the High-

landers, had received no orders to advance, nor were orders ever received until too late in the day. And reinforcements ordered up by G.H.A. failed to come up until the *following morning* at 8 o'clock, at which hour they endeavoured hopelessly to charge up Hill 70, but being repulsed, failed to support the occupied trenches.

So that from 9 a.m. on the 25th September until 8 p.m. on the 26th September a thin line of exhausted Highlanders had managed desperately to hold on to the hill although the redoubt on the crest was lost.

Nor did these Scotchies have any relief until the night of the 26th, when General David Campbell led his 6th Cavalry Brigade, horses and all, into Loos, dismounted at the cemetery, and filed his men into the trenches.

The New Army divisions which had been sent up too late had scattered to the four winds.

Thus, thanks to the tardiness of those responsible for carrying out Sir John French's orders in the matter of reinforcements, Loos, 1915, was a striking failure instead of being a brilliant success.

On the following day, the 27th September, having taken up our new position, Arthur Radcliffe and I went along the lately vacated German trenches in search of a suitable observation post. This O.P. was finally selected about one mile in front of the guns, overlooking Loos. During our wanderings amongst the old German trenches, Radcliffe suddenly shouted out that there were some Germans following us. I whipped round, and found I had no revolver. Four Huns, miserable specimens, appeared. Radcliffe, who spoke the language well, shouted to them to throw up their hands; this they did, shrieking for mercy. Radcliffe marched them off under an escort of two telephonists armed with a shovel and a billhook. The little party was received with cheers by the battery. One of the prisoners presented Radcliffe with a pair of Zeiss glasses. For many days Germans still lay concealed in these trenches. The dead, British, French, and German, lay everywhere unburied.

On Monday, 27th September, a further attack by the Guards Division took place. A terrific bombardment commenced at 2 p.m. I was observing, as usual, with Radcliffe; our O.P. was frightfully shelled. A large piece of shell struck me in the shoulder, cutting through my coat and shirt, and only scratching me. Our O.P. was a German officers' dug-out on the edge of the hill overlooking Loos, an off-shoot of the German rear trench. The dug-out contained a large bed, sheets, arm-chair, table, big



FOUR HUNS, MISERABLE SPECIMENS, APPEARED.



TO VNU  
ANNOUNCED

looking-glass, and was most comfortable. We made use of it for about two weeks. It was a great sight to see the Guards pour over the hill down into Loos. Many of them climbed over our O.P., and I helped to hand up two or three machine guns, and to give the attacking party their general direction of advance. What splendid fellows they were ; one hated to think that many would not return. We could see the whole attack, and as they swept up the opposite hill we lifted our fire. Three times they charged up the hill, but although they captured Puits 14 once more, no troops could withstand the enfilading German machine guns, so the Guards had to be content to man and consolidate the trenches in Chalk Pit, which we had already occupied. There were many casualties, and the German machine guns on Hill 70 had done their work and had enfiladed the Guards as they advanced on the *Puits* at the end of Bois Hugo. It was all so near, we could see every detail of that gallant charge up the slope.

The rattle of arms, the roar of guns, the whirl of charging men ; the slight figure of a young Guards officer leading his devoted men, himself fifty yards ahead, never hesitating but facing certain death.

The Furies let loose on a handful of heroes who never flinched !

Then, how well I remember it ! The intense hush, the dense smoke lifting to reveal silent forms stretched out on the green hill—nothing else.

One fleeting spectacle of heroism in this endless drama of death and destruction.

Later in the evening we saw one poor wounded fellow of the 1st Scots Guards lying out in the grass between the British and German trenches. He crept on hands and knees from one corpse to another until he found a water-bottle, then he took a long drink and sank down again.

For reasons which I find it hard to define it struck me, as the fighting went on, that the Brigade of Guards immediately to our left front might not be in close touch with the rest of their division.

I telephoned through to my Brigade Headquarters and the answer was not reassuring, so I resolved to make certain on this point.

Leaving Radcliffe in charge of the observation post and calling for a volunteer (who was immediately forthcoming), the young orderly and I climbed out of our trench and crossed a rather unpleasant quarter of a mile or so of open grass downland which descended to the outskirts of the village of Loos.

Our way was pretty freely sprinkled with shell ; and as we approached

the outlying shattered houses we held our weapons very much at the "ready," for German snipers frequented many of the outbuildings.

To the east of the village we presently found the little shelled cottage whose cellar formed the headquarters of the Guards Brigade in question.

Here we discovered the Brigade Major, the doctor, the officer in charge of communications, and General Ponsonby, the gallant old leader.

I talked to the latter, and found that my surmise was correct; the Brigade was utterly out of touch at that time with Divisional Headquarters owing to the lines being cut, and they were badly in want of help.

Casualties were very heavy, and altogether they were feeling rather desperate.

Ponsonby was grateful for the help I was able to give in eventually connecting them up with their Division through my own Division.

I stayed a short time and chatted to the Brigade Commander, whose acquaintance I had made in Cairo, where years before he had commanded a battalion of the Coldstreams.

He was lying on a bare mattress on the floor of the cellar, utterly exhausted after a spell of handling his men in a desperate encounter on the hill opposite.

He was charming and courteous as always.

The Welsh Guards proved their metal that day and behaved with gallantry. When light was fading and shelling had relaxed, Radcliffe and I started for the battery. Part of the walk from O.P. to battery took one through the old Hun trenches, at that time stinking of gas and with a good sprinkling of dead Germans in them. Part of our way led across the open grass plain; a particularly unpleasant part of it existed at the space between the British and German lines, now deserted, and here corpses lay pretty numerous, some six months old, mere skeletons.

That evening we found the sergeant-major and a corporal of the 1st Scots Guards Battalion making their way back wounded, and we helped them in and conducted them to the dressing station.

The Guards Division had 2000 casualties that day, not such a toll as one feared at the time.

On September 29th we were informed that the battery would be taken back to rest, but that promise (like many to follow) of a well-earned rest, which our men needed, was not to be realized until weeks afterwards.

Other guns had suffered severely, and we were required to assist another



THE SLIGHT FIGURE OF A YOUNG GUARDS' OFFICER LEADING HIS DEVOTED MEN.

TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE

Division. The whole of the 15th Division, with the exception of the field artillery brigade and some howitzers, were now withdrawn to rest.

By this time the battery was more or less settled in a position previously selected by the R.A. Brigade Staff. This position was situated in a salient and in the open. This speaks for itself. The guns were placed along a trench, the parapet of which afforded a little protection—iron rails placed side by side leaving no space between, with earth on top, formed head cover to the emplacements. The men lived in dug-outs, deep, and, as one hoped, fairly secure. A cellar under a house a few yards away served for the officers' mess, the men's cook-house being next door.

Communication by telephone was established with the usual care and efficiency of detail by Radcliffe. This officer all through was responsible for the telephonic communication, and his work with the help of the telephonists was extremely effective. The wire was laid very often necessarily in the open; necessitating as it did the laying of some miles of wire, one can realize the constant risk the job entailed. Radcliffe<sup>1</sup> and his men were continually called upon to go out exposed to very heavy fire to mend the wire if cut by shells. Their conduct in regard to this was praiseworthy to a degree. It took four whole days to lay out the great length required for extra security, and when it is understood that this was done under fire, and that the zone was continually changed, it is not surprising that nine of the fourteen telephonists were wounded—three of this number very severely.

On one of these days the battery was particularly badly shelled and gas came sweeping down on us. It was necessary to bring up more ammunition, and as teams could not come up to the guns, owing to the shelling, it had to be dumped down behind some houses. It was difficult with the few men available at the guns to get this ammunition conveyed up to the battery position. Twelve men of the 1st Battalion Gloucesters volunteered without hesitation to assist, and very grateful we were for their help.

Shelling on the battery was very severe, still these good fellows worked on, carrying rounds of ammunition across the open. One man fell down gassed, but got up and insisted on going on with the work until he again fell down exhausted, when he was dragged away by the battery sergeant-major. This splendid behaviour under fire was mentioned. They named us the "Glos'ter Battery" in recognition of our assistance in an attack.

We were now exposed day and night for nine days to German shells,

frontal and enfilading fire : occasionally 10-inch shells and armour-piercing shells, a severe strain on the men who were already much in need of rest.

On October 8th at 11 a.m. an unexpected counter-attack took place by the Germans, who started a tremendous bombardment all along our infantry trenches and on our batteries and observing stations ; the bombardment increased in violence as the day went on.

Our guns retaliated. I was with the battery at the time, but at 2 p.m., as an attack by Huns seemed imminent, I crawled up a communication trench to the observing station and joined Radcliffe, the F.O.O. The whole valley of Loos was shrouded in thick smoke, the shelling all round us was very violent, and I saw the roofs of one or two houses below us in Loos literally lifted off by big shells. By telephone I ordered all men to don gas helmets, and this was as well, as gas shells were falling round the battery and at the observing station.

Gunner Stepney, at one of the guns, was severely wounded in the head, and Gunner King, who ran out to warn some men to put on their gas helmets, was shot in the head. Apparently the Germans had made a determined attempt near Bois Hugo and Hill 70. The noise and smoke of hundreds of guns was appalling. Nine German battalions had suddenly been brought up. They made four attacks, but were unable to cross into the open, the gun fire and machine gun fire preventing them from issuing beyond the front edge of the woods and *Puits* 14. As they massed behind the *Puits* we concentrated all guns on to them, and they were literally mown down. Our infantry in the trenches stood up on the parapet with machine guns and fired point-blank at the closely packed bodies of Germans.

To describe what I saw from my observation station.

I suddenly espied straight in front of me a tall grey uniformed German officer coming down a grass drive in the Hugo Wood.

I concentrated my field-glasses on this forbidding form, and looking beyond, I discovered one or two more grey figures, and suddenly realized that the Germans were pouring down this avenue and settling into some trenches near the fringe of the wood which they obviously supposed were concealed by the trees.

I could see one man wiping the barrel of his rifle ; another buttoning up his coat as he took up his position.

Already the avenues through the wood swarmed with Germans.

My subaltern reported what I saw by telephone, and so the news was spread, and as swiftly were our guns distributed to deal with this Hugo Wood, now a living target.

In a few seconds the order came up—and it was clear.

Our light guns would account for the front fringe of the wood, the howitzers the centre of the wood, the heavies would barrage the rear of the wood so that no one could go back, whilst the French 75's would storm the right flank.

At a given moment with a deafening roar a hundred guns crashed into Bois Hugo.

The result was ghastly—they were caught in a veritable trap.

Thirty-one Huns only attempted to cross to Chalk Pit Wood in the open, but all were killed with the exception of one, who actually reached the British trench. This man ran across to our trenches with his hands up, carrying no rifle, and was chased through the wood at the end of a bayonet. His life was spared. His version of the story was that he was the sole man who had made a real attempt to obey orders ; these were to recapture all ground lost. There were, as stated before, nine battalions to do this.

Our four batteries were, on the following day, congratulated and thanked for the "conspicuous part played in the recent operations." This was gratifying, since it was the second time in about ten days that the Brigade had been congratulated, the first time as a result of Loos, when the wording had been "particularly those batteries which had been pushed up forward."

Two days later another observing station had to be chosen to enable us to observe fire further to the north. This was extremely difficult, and about three more miles of telephone wire had to be laid out for communication. That day the French made a tremendous bombardment on our right and were successful in recapturing a lost trench. The Germans retaliated very heavily with big shells, and picked out my battery for particular attention.

While I was observing, messages kept coming through that my guns were being heavily shelled, and the shelling over our heads was severe. I ordered all the detachments, except the men at the gun which was engaged in wire cutting, to go to ground. Then a message came through that Sergeant Ayres had been wounded, followed by another to say that Sergeant Ayres and six men had been buried by a shell and that endeavours were being made under great difficulties, owing to the heavy fire, to extricate



them. The wire-cutting gun continued firing. Eventually poor Sergeant Ayres and six gunners were dug out of the debris. Ayres and four gunners were killed, and two others, who had been buried, were dragged out bruised and terribly shaken. Another gunner was then severely wounded. This accounted for the whole of one gun detachment. All the men of another detachment were gassed, and men were wounded at all the remaining guns. The gun position was a terrible sight, the ground everywhere was torn to pieces by big shells.

That day's loss we could never replace. Sergeant Ayres was the cheeriest and pluckiest fellow in the world. I heard him at Loos in the heat of action say, with a laugh, "This is the hottest thing I've ever been in. If we get through this we'll always celebrate the 26th September." Ayres was an old soldier, old in experience, though not actually in years. He was only thirty-two, and he had served in the Marines. We all loved him, and the men felt his loss and the loss of their other pals tremendously. We buried the poor fellows that night in one big trench, a minister representing each religion (Church of England and Roman Catholic) assisting at the sad little ceremony.

Then followed another bad day for my little battery. The Germans started at about 10 a.m. shelling us with great accuracy. Casualties amongst the men occurred immediately. The detachment at No. 3 gun had just received orders to get to ground when a heavy shell (10-inch) plunged down and blew this gun clean up in the air, large iron girders and all. The gun was now merely a piece of scrap iron, twisted and distorted, and perched up on the parapet, an iron girder close by sticking into the ground like an arrow shot from a bow; everything blown to atoms. Immediately afterwards No. 4 gun pit was blown in.

Shell after shell came raining down on the battery with wonderful accuracy. A few minutes later another huge armour-piercing projectile landed on the three-storied house used as our cook-house. The roof was absolutely lifted off, the walls crumbling in and burying sixteen of my men.

Sergeant Raynes, who had particularly distinguished himself that day and shown remarkable coolness, was himself buried under the house. Although bleeding in the head and wounded in the leg he extricated himself and dug out Sergeant-Major Austin, severely wounded. He carried him across the road to a dressing-station and returned to help others who were buried. The previous day, when Sergeant Ayres was shot in the leg,



WITH A DEAFENING ROAR A HUNDRED GUNS CRASHED INTO BOIS HUGO.

70 VINU  
ABRACHAD

Raynes ran out in the open, carried Ayres to a dug-out, and, noticing that he had no gas helmet on, stripped his own off and placed it over the wounded man's head to protect him from gas shells, which were falling all round. I recommended Raynes for bravery, and he was awarded the Victoria Cross. Eight of the sixteen men buried under the house were suffering from wounds. All were badly shaken.

The whole battery was one great horrible mess. Wagons lay overturned and ammunition was strewn in every direction.

For a short period I was actually left alone with my guns, as I was obliged to send *the whole of the personnel* (at that time in the firing line) away to the dressing-station. Two of the officers were still at the observing station—we had used two that day—and I had hurried back to the guns on hearing of these casualties in the battery. Denniston had been a great assistance during this time. None of the officers were touched.

We managed next day to assist in an attack on our left, no small achievement under the prevailing conditions. On that day Radcliffe had a slight "go" of gas, and three of the telephonists on their way home were rather badly gassed. Although for the third time we were told that we should get a rest, this was cancelled as before.

Two days later I was told that now I might prepare a position for the battery in the gardens close at hand (the position I had previously begged repeatedly to be allowed to occupy). Having nearly completed two of the gun pits, we were told we should not occupy this position, but were now going to be given a little rest. This time, at all events, I was assured that we should be taken out of action on the following night, to enable me to look into the detail of the personnel and equipment and overhaul the battery generally. The General came to see us and congratulated me on the performance of the battery: "No battery could have done better, and I shall tell your men this." This, however, he forgot to do.

That same evening all orders as to rest were cancelled for the fifth time in about three weeks. We were now to alter our position and take over from the artillery of the 1st Division. It was with feelings of sorrowful regret that I went to see my men and had to announce for the fifth time that there could be no rest. The disappointment was, I know, acute, but the fine discipline which never relaxed and which had carried us through in very trying moments in the course of twenty-six days' fighting asserted itself. This constant contradiction of orders, however,

the continual change of zones, entailing the laying out of many miles of wire, with numberless orders and counter-orders, were, even if necessary, difficult to grasp.

The previous evening, during a pause in the firing, I had gone to No. 3 gun to examine the sights. As I was looking over the sights a 5.9 shell burst immediately in front of the muzzle of this gun. I ordered all the men to take cover in the trench which lay about thirty yards behind the gun position. No sooner had they cleared out than the shelling became universal all round, many shells falling amongst our guns, and others on the road and near the houses close by.

As I watched from the trench, where I had also taken cover, I saw two French *artilleurs* on the road bowled over; one was killed and the other apparently not, because, as I looked, I saw Thompson, my second subaltern, leap out of our cellar and get hold of the man, and shortly afterwards, in the midst of bursting shells, carry him off. He had strapped the poor fellow's arm over a gaping wound (where his lung was exposed), and then proceeded to carry him to a little dressing-station near at hand, where I went out and joined him.

On another occasion, when in action in Loos, he and Radcliffe,<sup>1</sup> hearing the piteous cries of some human creatures in agony, had discovered a German officer and man both crouched side by side in a small straw shelter near our guns. They were dreadfully wounded. The two boys dressed their wounds as well as it was possible and gave them some water from their water-bottle. Almost as they left the little shelter a German shell burst right on top of the two sufferers and blew them to pieces.

Colonel Lazare, commanding the French guns alongside my battery, was an exceedingly fine example of the French gunner. He had told me how suicidal it was for me to keep the position I held at the time. He said, "Your men are fine fellows, and have grit." He was an exact counterpart in appearance of Dr. Joseph Barnby (late organist at Eton), wearing large gold-rimmed glasses and a dark beard; a courteous, kindly fellow, very outspoken on occasion, and he did not hesitate to criticize in very strong language the want of prudence (as he called it) in what he saw of the British artillery. And certainly in many points he was right in his criticism.

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Radcliffe died in the summer of 1917 as a result of wounds at Ypres. He received the Military Cross for conspicuous bravery, not long before his undaunted spirit passed out. Beloved, gallant youth.



HOW SERGT. RAYNES WON THE V.C.

70. VIII  
ABBAO. 140

It was during this period that one day I by chance came across General A. E. Wardrop, who was then commanding the artillery of the Guards Division. I found him alone, tramping round the Loos salient reconnoitring for battery positions.

Wardrop spelt the opening chapter of my soldiering—he stood out as the most prominent figure at the time I first donned the “Jacket,” when as a captain he commanded “X” Battery Royal Horse Artillery.

As a disciplinarian he frightened me horribly in my youth and inexperience : indeed, he nearly frightened me out of the Service.

But I never realized until years afterwards how greatly I was indebted to this singular officer for instilling into me the necessity of waking up and learning my profession—or leaving it.

I did wake up, and no senior officer ever frightened me afterwards.

All that need be said here is that those who ever served under this efficient gunner, whether officers or men, were lucky.

On two or three occasions in the War when the Staff, glittering over our heads, had been unusually interfering and annoying, and when indeed one began to feel that fighting the German was child’s play to this continual badgering one was subjected to by those red-hatted gentlemen who could so often have helped and not hindered, it seemed providential that Wardrop should have been the one to give the cheering note and the incentive to “carry on” ; and at Loos, when the tide was very low and our feelings against the Staff were very high, all he said was, when I met him wandering about the salient and we had discussed the situation, “By God, your men must be proud of themselves—I bet their tails are up.”

Major-General A. E. Wardrop, C.B., C.M.G., served as Lord Cavan’s artillery General at Ypres and later in Italy.

## HIGHLANDERS AT LOOS

*Copy of Letter written by Second-in-Command Cameron Highlanders*

MY DEAR —

I have read your account of the fighting at and near Loos with the utmost interest ; a very fine account it is.

It’s impossible for any one man to note every detail. What happened on the morning of 26th September was that the 45th Brigade (the only one, I believe) were ordered to attack the redoubt on Hill 70 at 9 a.m., after one hour’s preparation by the artillery.



This they did, but found it impossible to get and hold ground further advanced than the most forward trench on Hill 70.

Our losses would have been much more severe had it not been for the excellent practice of your battery, and I am fully convinced that a strong German counter-attack was only prevented from developing because of your accurate fire over the brow of the hill. We all feel that we owe your battery a deep debt of gratitude for your work on that day.

The general retirement was, as we thought, an ordered retirement, and when it was made clear to us that it was not intended to give up the ground so hardly won, my battalion, or as many of them as could be collected, went back and re-occupied the trench on Hill 70, and held it until relieved at 2 a.m. on 27th September by 6th Cavalry Brigade under General David Campbell.

Good luck to you, and many thanks for letting me see your most admirable account.

You have been tried exceedingly high.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) A. CAMPBELL.

## IN THE YEAR OF THE WAR, 1916

### PART II

“Remember, if I fall, a soldier's death is glorious, and if I could choose that is the way I would go.”

### THE SOMME

**I** WAS sitting on deck in the P. and O. ss. *Namur*, two days out of Bombay and bound for England, *en route* for France once more. For six days before leaving India I had been stewing in that suffocating city. It was good to be at sea again and in God's fresh air.

I had not until then had the heart to write any notes on the Somme battles, but time had soothed, to a certain extent, the sorrow which I sustained during my last fighting in France.

For five months I had been in India, as the next chapter will show, helping to convey some of the experiences and lessons of this war to my brother officers, and having completed my task I was now returning to the Western Front. During the voyage home I wrote down what I remembered of my experiences on the Somme.

The last time I prattled about this cursed War it was to convey some idea of the battle of Loos as portrayed by a battery commander. One well-known officer doing duty at the War Office read this little account, and his remarks on the performance of my battery are worth pondering over. We were lunching at Boodles at the time. “You see,” he said, “that fly on the wall: your battery in this huge war is of just so much importance and of no more than this fly.” I understood his point.

Brave things were done by officers and men in that affair, and never a mention for any of those plucky young fellows. That was all many months ago, and big battles have been fought and many lives have passed since that September, although there have been no bloodier fights than

Loos, where 80,000 casualties on our side in a few hours must amply tell the tale.

In January, 1916, I took out a battery of the New Army, with the 34th Division—a Division which was destined later on to take a brilliant part in the Somme battles. At this time every day to me was one of interest and joy. Full of interest, which the training of batteries must always be when you see the result of your work developing week by week, and your battery eventually fit to take part in the mighty struggle, aye, and to distinguish itself at last. Then the joy because I was with my boy pal, my beloved friend, Bertie Wolseley. I had asked for him to come to my battery, and, thanks to our General and Arthur Young at the War Office, this request had been granted. Happy days those were; hours spent together, he and I in our great and lasting friendship and in the love of teaching our men. What a precious time!—never to be forgotten; and all the joy and love of those days to end in sorrow; the young joyous life was so soon to be wrenched away in the flower of perfect youth. In the following July Bertie Wolseley was struck down by a shell. We had always said, let us be together if anything is to happen to either of us, and thank God that he was in my arms—my little pal—almost immediately after the mortal wound smote him to earth. All that could be done to save that dear life was done. His own men at the gun, behind which the boy had been struck, looked down upon the gentle face of their officer, whom they dearly loved one and all, and we carried him away.

A school friend of Bertie Wolseley's wrote the following :—

W. B. WOLSELEY

A Harrow boy—a simple boy,  
my friend,  
My friend throughout the ups  
and downs of life,  
Stood by his gun, amid the  
thunderous strife,  
A Harrow boy—a simple boy,  
my friend.

An officer—a gentleman,  
a man,  
A man whose heart was noble  
to the core,  
An officer—a gentleman,  
a man.

A Wooden Cross—a little mound,  
that's all,  
That's all there is to mark the  
sacred place,  
Sacred to Harrow Hill and  
Harrow's Race,  
A Wooden Cross—a little mound—  
that's all.

K. R. BULL.

This all happened on the 6th July in our position in front of Albert. We had spent half the winter and the spring just south of Armentières and at Fleurbaix, and finally the 34th Division entrained south to Albert in preparation for the operations on the Somme. The infantry of the 34th Division, like the personnel of its artillery, consisted of Tyneside Scottish and Tyneside Irish—North countrymen, hard men and hard fighters; so that the Division did gallant work pushing up on the first day of the attack (1st July) into Contalmaison, and advancing some hundreds of yards up the slope towards Pozières. The 34th Division formed the right division of the centre corps (3rd Corps) of the five corps of which the Fourth Army consisted. The whole of this army was engaged from north to south, that is to say, 8th, 10th, 3rd, 16th, and 13th Corps. The attack was launched at 7.30 on the misty morning of 1st July, after a very heavy final bombardment. We had pounded the enemy for a week before this. The attack extended along a front of twenty-six miles from Gommecourt in the north, on the extreme right of the Third Army, to Foucaucourt in the south, on the right of the Sixth French Army. By the 3rd July we had made, in our corps, 4163 prisoners, including 69 officers. Boiselles was in our hands, and we had advanced considerably up the hill. By the 10th July the 3rd Corps Artillery had fired at the enemy 702,400 shells of all calibres. They say that on the Somme, up to about the second week in August, the British had let loose 100,000 tons of metal. I can believe it from the sound—the everlasting roar which dinned in our ears for many days from our position in the front row of that mighty sea of guns of every size.

We reduced the zone for which we were responsible—two thousand yards—to absolute pulp, so that the hostile guns with their observation stations knocked out, and telephone wire ripped up, were unable to return our fire.

On the eve of our advance a flight of aeroplanes, armed with rockets fired from pistols, attacked the five Hun observation balloons which had

been watching us for days, and these descended in flames—a glorious sight. This, to the disgust of Fritz, happened all along the front to be attacked, and several balloons suffered a like fate.

The British Division on our left had a terrible time of it and was unable to advance at all: the dead heaped up on No-Man's-Land was a sight not to be forgotten.

A few days after our advance I visited the newly captured German trenches, so filled with dead that it was difficult to avoid walking on the corpses—everything shapeless. The faces of the dead seemed to have become a part of the sand-bagged parapets and trench bottoms. The stench was overpowering.

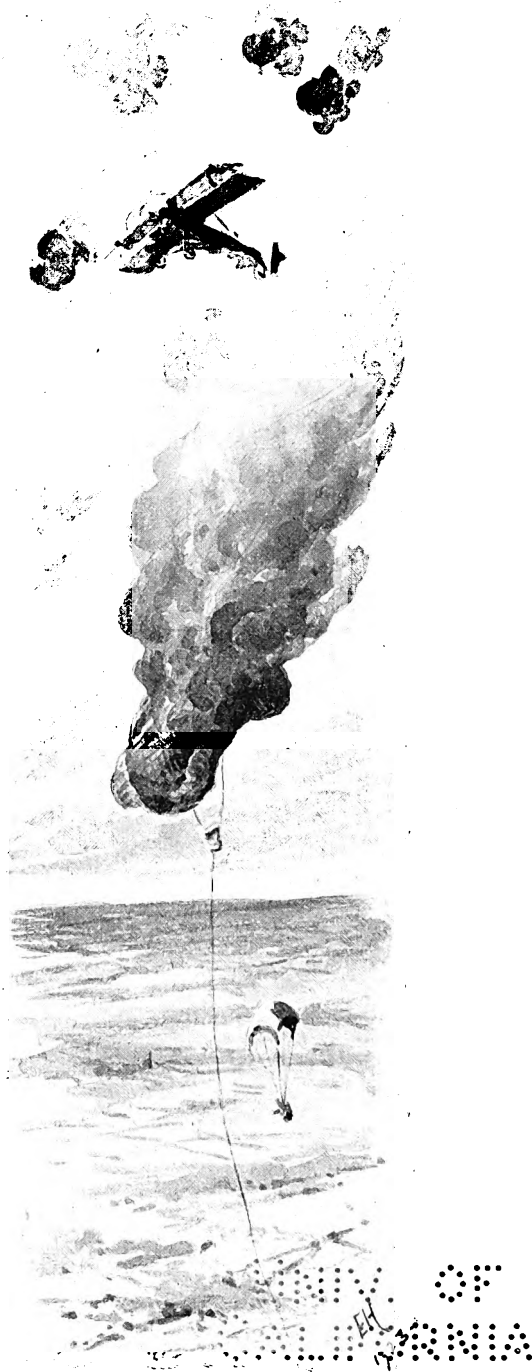
Later on, one or two more rather perilous excursions had to be made with the object of selecting observation posts and advanced positions for guns. In these succeeding days Colonel Warburton, who commanded our 160th Brigade R.F.A., showed great skill in the handling of his guns, and thus preventing repeated local hostile attacks from taking effect. He did great work, and for this and his gallant example all through was awarded the D.S.O.

My four guns in just over two weeks fired off 14,000 rounds day and night. Many noteworthy incidents occurred, and my officers and men showed their worth, and I had every reason to be intensely proud of the battery.

Young Charlton, the second subaltern, with two telephonists, acted as Liaison Officer up in Contalmaison, arriving before the Seaforths' Battalion Headquarters had got there. At that time the little village was in desperate plight. This party established telephonic communication with guns under very trying circumstances in the Chateau Contalmaison cellar. The dead lay everywhere, and during the time that Charlton and his two men were settling down, one side of the cellar wall was shelled in, and the wires were cut the first night twelve times. It was almost certain death to go out and mend the wire. Nevertheless these tough fellows went out time after time, so that communication never failed at this critical period, and, in consequence, we were able to form barrages of fire with the group of guns to stop repeated German attacks in front of Pozières and to the east of Contalmaison.

One of these men was given a card of recommendation for his fine work. God bless such brave fellows!

These two telephonists were father and son, both miners.



AEROPLANE ATTACK ON GERMAN  
OBSERVATION BALOONS.

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Boiselles, Contalmaison, and Pozières all fell in time, after desperate fighting, and all these days our batteries were pounding away and doing good work. We were thanked by the infantry we supported—the infantry trusted us and were grateful.

As for the barbed wire in front of us, it had been cleared away by our shells. I have never seen wire so cleaned up. On the first day a sergeant in the Tyneside Scottish, with blood trickling from head and arm, came strolling back through the guns, and we shouted to him, "Was the wire cut well enough for you?" "Wire," says he, "Ave coom frae the fourth line, you b—— gunners, and I could na find a blessed piece of wire to clean ma pipe with. Yes, there's nae wire left."

The following gracious message went round the Army, and made us feel proud :—

" Headquarters, R.A.,

3rd Corps.

160th Brigade—

8th Divnl. Arty.

19th Divnl. Arty.

23rd Divnl. Arty.

34th Divnl. Arty.

Heavy Artillery.

The Commander-in-Chief visited Corps Headquarters this evening, and when leaving directed me to convey not only his own warm personal thanks but that of the whole Army to all ranks of the Royal Artillery of the corps that have taken part in the battle now in progress for the gallantry, skill and devotion, and endurance with which they have carried out their duties in every particular.

He stated that he had issued an Order of the Day to the Army at large, in which the services of the Royal Artillery in general had been specially mentioned, but wished his appreciation and thanks to be conveyed more specifically to all ranks of the R.A. 3rd Corps, of which every individual officer, N.C.O. and man had worthily upheld the great traditions of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, beyond which no higher praise can be given.

(Signed) H. UNIAKKE,

Brig.-General,

Commanding Royal

Artillery, 3rd Corps."

9th July, 1916.

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Shortly after this I was recommended to command an artillery brigade by Brig.-General Arthur Kirby, at that time C.R.A., 34th Division. Kirby, by his personal charm of manner and quiet bravery, was dear to us all. He combined great knowledge of gunnery with his other gifts as a brilliant soldier.

In the following August I received orders from War Office to proceed to India for a visit to that country of five months or so duration, in order to found a school of gunnery. I retained the temporary rank of Lieut.-Colonel for this duty.

Univ. of  
California

TO VISIT  
ABSORGLAO



EVERY SORT OF RUFFIAN FROM THE HILLS . . . SQUATTED ROUND . . . TO GET A GLIMPSE OF THE GREAT CHIEF

### PART III

## A VISIT TO INDIA

**I**NDIA, what a country to buck about ! Twice during my service I had left it in disgust after a few months' sojourn. I am an authority on nothing connected with this glorified country. To me it is one huge conglomeration of muddles, with here and there streaks of extraordinary efficiency. I felt convinced that with Sir Charles Monro, who had lately arrived as Commander-in-Chief, and his Chief of the Staff there would be drastic changes in military questions and that a healthy sprinkling of exceptionally good officers lately sent to Army Headquarters from home would have the long-desired effect, please God, of working off old scores of red tape and tomfoolery too long endured. Want of organization has been the mischief in almost every department ; and officials of any branch, whether military or civil, have been content to crawl on like half-dead flies in chaotic surroundings year in year out, drawing in many cases, I suppose, a sufficiency of money to counterbalance their existence and loss of health.

The poor white women one feels for, with their drawn and haggard faces—old before they are young. Everywhere sickness and full hospitals.

On arrival at Bombay I received orders to proceed to Akora, which lies right up in the north-west frontier province, not far from the frontier, about 1600 miles from Bombay. In the ship outward bound I had made the acquaintance of General F. E. Johnson, one of the most charming and capable soldiers it has been my good fortune to meet. This officer was on his way to India to take up the duties of Inspector-General of R.H. and R.F.A. As my work there was almost entirely under his surveillance I had every opportunity of recognizing the immense value of this exceptional gunner. It was at once a pleasure and a privilege to be able to assist him in my capacity as Commandant of School of Gunnery. Let me add that from the day I landed to the day of my departure I met with nothing

but kindness at all hands, and many new friends I made—people I want to see again.

Thanks to the able staff at my disposal (many of whom I had great difficulty with the authorities to keep on my staff), the school was successful, and we all felt that we had been able to assist the many officers sent from all parts of India on the Gunnery Courses ; and they were, I know, grateful because of the many appreciative letters I received afterwards. Besides running the School of Gunnery I also acted as Commandant to two artillery camps near Delhi, and assisted in arranging the artillery manœuvres which were held in the north of India. And, amongst other duties, I went down to the Staff School in Central India, where I lectured to budding staff officers—travelling by train during the period of five months a distance of 10,000 miles. The School of Gunnery opened on my arrival at Akora on 15th October, 1916.

On the 15th December the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Charles Munro, arrived with the military Secretary, General Scott, and other staff officers to see the school.

The camp which formed the school consisted of rows of tents divided up by broad roads. The school staff and mess were situated in the centre of the camp, with tents of officers attending the courses grouped about. To the south a battery of artillery had its encampment, to the east a troop of Native cavalry, and on the west side two companies of Sikh pioneers flanked the main camp. The camp in all held about a thousand persons, with their horses and guns. It lay in the valley of the Cabul river, on its right bank between the two spurs of the Himalayas, the home of many unhangd villains. One could see the snow mountain peaks away in the distance across the river.

The Commander-in-Chief arrived by train at the little wayside station of Akora at 8 o'clock in the morning and remained with us until 3 o'clock that afternoon. A guard of honour was drawn up in the station, and the whole platform was covered with a crimson carpet. Every sort of ruffian from the hills, the most villainous-looking rabble, squatted round the station to get a glimpse of the great Chief. Later on in the day he stood looking at these rascals and asked me who they were. I told him they were probably some of the greatest murderers in Northern India. Akora was well known for its thieves and cut-throats, and not so long ago a party of this ilk had stopped the mail train, killed the engine driver and robbed the van ; and a party also had slunk into Akora



THEY FELT FOR ME IN MY GRIEF.

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village a few days ago and had shot two defenceless creatures of their own colour.

In the morning, when the Chief's train arrived, I strolled up to his saloon to consult him as to the day's programme and remained for breakfast. Later on the Chief with his entourage all mounted their horses and, followed by a guard of Indian cavalry, swung away for a short distance across the hills to witness artillery firing, a mounted orderly riding immediately behind the Chief with the Union Jack slung to his lance. Then another large cavalcade of horsemen came trotting up, consisting of general officers from neighbouring camps and the officers of the Senior Course. The Chief took up a position which commanded a good view of the ground to be occupied by two batteries which were to prepare for an attack on a village about two miles distant. In the meantime a howitzer battery came into action ; and over the hill in the distance a field battery could be seen manœuvring up into its position. The Chief then called to me in an aggrieved tone, " Look at those horses which seem to be in everybody's way—the battery staff of course. Whenever I attend artillery manœuvres the battery staff comes busting along. The leading bombardier hurls the Inspecting Officer into the ditch at the commencement of the show, where he lies for the rest of the day and sees nothing more until it is time to go home. Look at them ! " I went up to Monro and said : " Yes, sir, this may be true, but you are at this moment pointing out to me your own horses and horse-holders, who must be collected together—they are not the battery staff, which has not even come into view, and," I added, " I wish you to watch carefully the battery staff which has been trained differently," at which he chuckled good-humouredly.

All the rest of the day he was delightful. I rode and talked with him all the morning, and at the end he clapped me on the shoulder, saying, " Well done, this is a good show, thank you very much." He insisted on seeing what had been the effect of the howitzer shells on a village. The damage on the village tower and walls proved, on examination, to be considerable. During the operations aeroplanes had co-operated, and fire was brought to bear on a certain point representing infantry massing, etc. The whole day's work was skilfully carried out and reflected great credit on the officers taking part. Later I introduced the Commander-in-Chief to the whole class of officers, and he had a kind word with many of them, then he turned to me and said, " I know this school of yours is a success because they all look so happy." We all rode into camp, where we had a hearty



lunch of roast duck and other delicacies, the native cooks having exerted themselves to do the best they could for this large and distinguished gathering. Sir Charles Monro is, as we all knew in France, a gallant soldier and well loved by those who served under him. A man to lean on and trust : bluff and straight as a die. Perhaps in his general appearance and manner he is not unlike père Joffre. He had met my Rifle Brigade brother, then a promising young general on the Western Front.

On the 5th January, Sir Arthur Barrett, Northern Army Commander, came up north with General Loch, R.E., to see us. Eight other generals and many infantry battalion commanders attended the day's operations. A battalion of Ghurkas advanced to the attack under the artillery fire, and later many questions were thrashed out as regards liaison and co-operation generally of artillery and infantry. Again aeroplanes searched for targets and assisted in observations of fire very successfully.

At Christmas time I went south to Delhi, in which place, during the cold months, the Army Headquarters and the Viceroy and Staff nowadays assemble. I stayed with one of the railway officials, and I did not hesitate to condemn his railways, and point out the shortcomings of this department. The railways in India are considered good, but to an outsider they fail in many respects. The stations are packed with screeching natives from morning till night (and also at night). Bedlam let loose is heaven to it. The dirt and stench of these railway stations is overpowering, but the officials responsible for this chaos are quite content to allow it to continue, their argument against stopping it being that to attempt to do so would create a rising in every part of India. The natives revel in travelling backwards and forwards in a congested railway carriage, squatting like monkeys on their hunkers, packed as tightly as sardines, with their wives huddled up aloft on what resembles a large hat-rack. At the stations they are herded up in filthy gangs for hours and sometimes days—missing train after train, filling the place with their shrill brain-racking cries, their natural stench and distressing dirtiness.

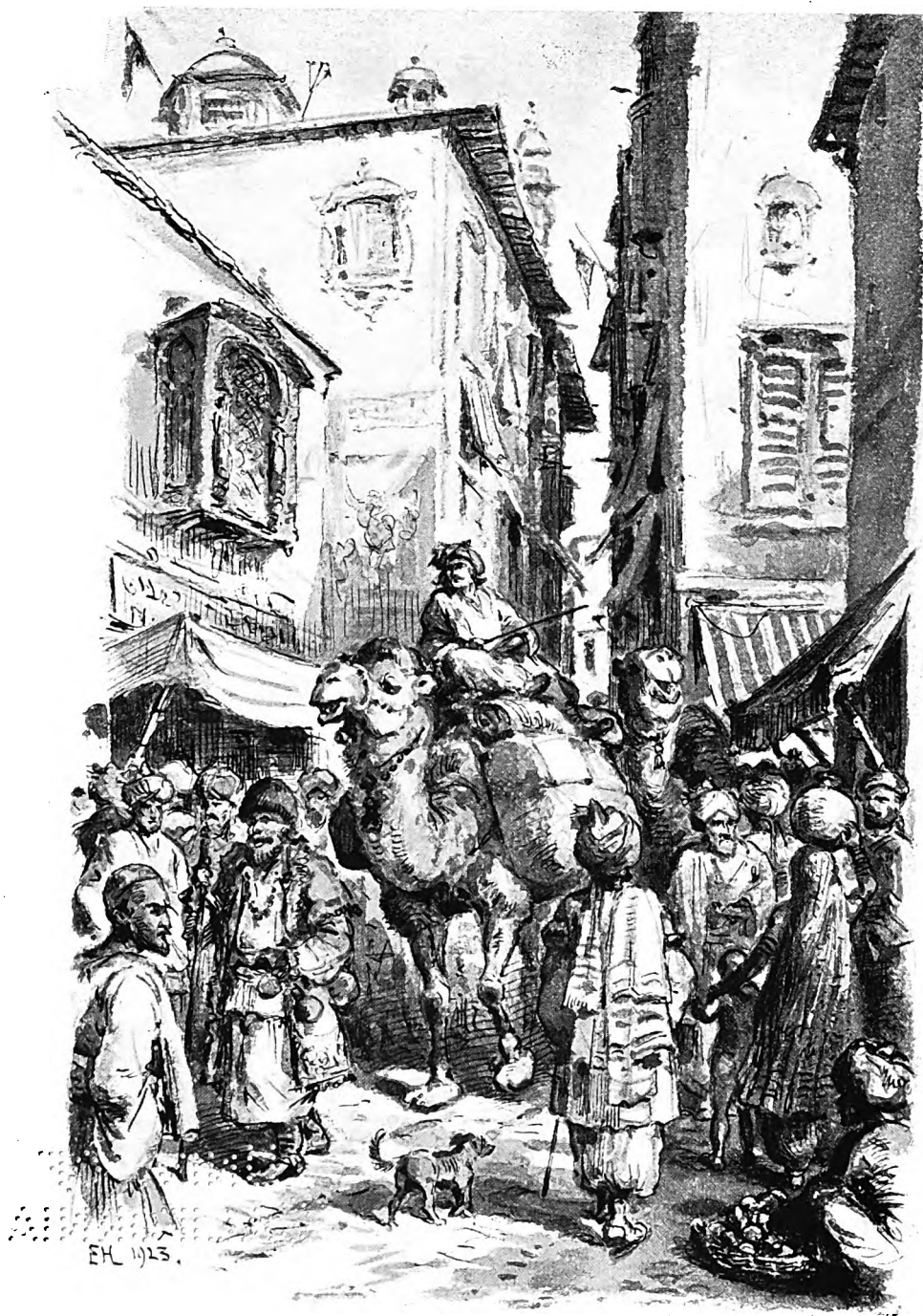
On the 2nd January I returned to the School of Gunnery to carry on with the last junior officers' course, and on January 13th, 1917, the school broke up. I travelled again to Delhi, as I now had attached myself to Army Headquarters. My departure from Akora is perhaps worth recording. A guard of honour of 100 Sikhs, great big swarthy-looking warriors with their black beards curled over their ears, formed up on the railway platform. Many of those fine fellows had fought at Neuve Chapelle in



TOSSING WITH A BUNNIA.

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PESHAWAR, A CITY ONE CAN ASSOCIATE WITH THE TALES OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

France. I personally inspected them, walking down the ranks and saying a word here and there. Many of the old hands possessed medals of the Frontier fights. Few of the men were under six feet in height. They had done exceptionally good work at my camp, loyal hard-working chaps. Then the train came in and I got into my reserved carriage. As the train slowly moved away there was a loud roar from these deep-throated fellows, who were chanting a kind of war-cry, and the officers in front, with hands held in supplication, were praying for my safe conduct in the future. This was to me necessarily a very moving sight ; and I stood at the door and saluted until the noise died away and they were out of sight. The officers and men of this regiment, the 36th Pioneers, knew I had appreciated their good work and excellent behaviour all through the period of the school, and it was gratifying to know that they realized this.

I remember when I received the crushing blow at the loss of my father, the two native officers of this regiment shadowed me about the camp until I turned round to an English officer and asked if he thought they had anything they wished to see me about. And the two hugely tall men came up to say that they wanted to show how deeply they felt for me in my grief. When I looked up into their fine dark eyes full of truth and goodness I was greatly touched.

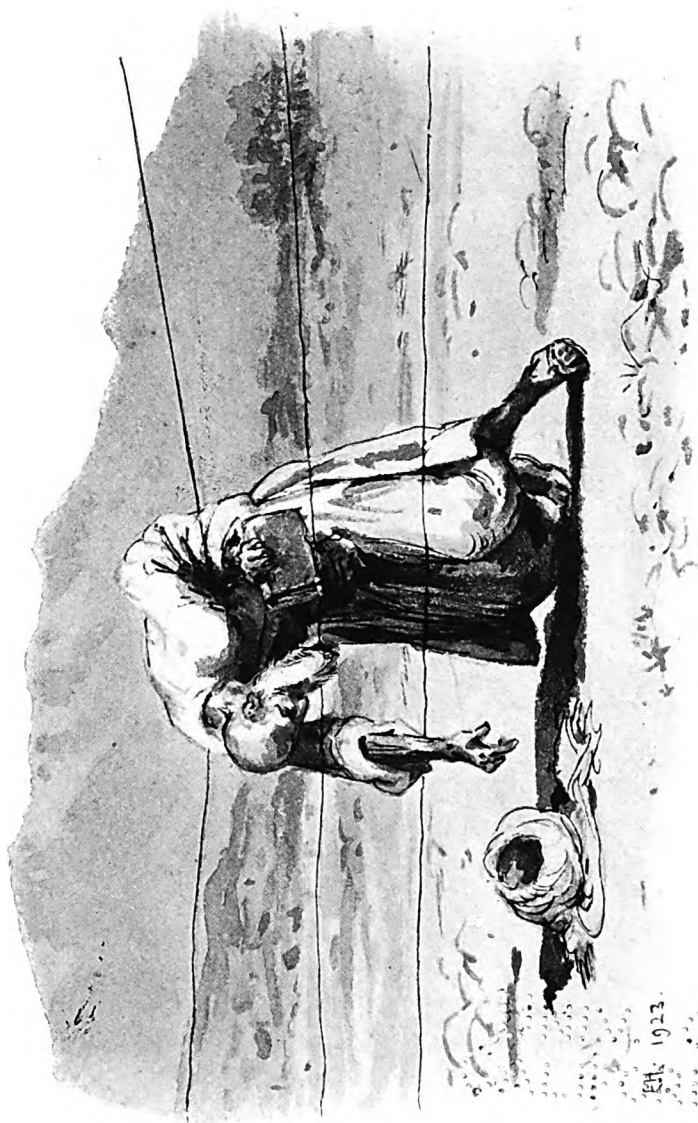
Both at Peshawar and at Delhi I spent many hours grubbing about in shops and bargaining over various purchases, which filled me with fascination. I managed to pick up one or two old carpets from Pundjeh and Bokhara, emeralds, Kashmir shawls and other little possible gifts for my mother and sister. Sometimes, on off days, I would spend hours haggling over some object of special delight and examining many things, pictures and old rare embroideries which were only brought to light from the back of the little shops after much persuasion and plenty of chaff. Once, after a long passage of arms with an old fellow, and after I had purchased a fine cloth (or Sari) of crimson and gold, we became such pals that he offered me his own private carriage to take me home. One felt like royalty stepping into this glorified two-horsed conveyance. Two men sat on the box-seat, and another filthy-looking creature hung on like a petrified monkey almost under the carriage. Cur-dogs barked, and small urchins, as must always happen at such obvious display of wealth, ran behind hoping for bakhshish. But the old man, who incidentally was known to be immensely rich, was not always so happy after his bargaining with me, and once, when he saw hesitation on my part, he recklessly offered to toss

me for some expensive article, and I won the toss. Then his long yellow teeth protruded to such an extent with wrath and disappointment that I thought they must ultimately become detached altogether.

These scenes all occurred in the Changni Chowk, Delhi, which has been recorded as the richest street in the whole world. A dirtier and more evil-smelling street it is difficult to imagine. The little tumble-down houses on either side, with large brown fly-blown monkeys perched on broken-down wooded balconies and on sloping roofs (picking fleas off their neighbours), and the dismal aspect of the place generally, certainly belies the fact of the vast riches to be found in this slum in which the largest diamonds and gems of rarest quality are hoarded in underground cellars.

The city of Peshawar is such a wonderful secret city that one can associate it with tales of the Arabian Nights. At that time one was only allowed to walk its old-world narrow streets by daylight, and then only in parties of two or three together. I have never seen such evil as is depicted on the faces of the long-haired ruffians in Peshawar. Occasionally some tribe will sweep down at night from the hills and do wholesale murder. The city is exposed to every villainy, situated as it is right on the frontier. At this time unfriendly tribes over the border to the north of Peshawar had elected to make war on us. The British had entrenched themselves along a portion of this frontier near Shabkadr, and along the position wire entanglements had been erected. This wire was electrocuted. One of the Mullahs, a knowing fellow, convinced that he would be able to pass through the wire, if he carried with him the Holy Book, the Koran, and that no harm could possibly come to him in such holiness, fell into the trap. Next morning this unfortunate priest was found hung up in the wire electrocuted, an unpleasant sight, with his Bible in his hand. Aircraft did useful work in this fighting, observing fire for the batteries. At other times aeroplanes flying one hundred feet above ground chivied the tribesmen, shooting them down with Lewis guns attached to the planes. This required great skill and judgment. It is no joke to be captured by these unscrupulous tribesmen, who resort to every sort of fiendish torture if you fall into their hands. Several of our men had their eyes gouged out, and were treated to other nameless tortures.

On the 8th February I went down to Indore, Central India, where I had been asked to lecture at the Staff School and to assist in a Staff Ride. I was put up at the Residency by Mr. Bosanquet, the Resident, who was perfectly charming and kind to us all. It was all most enjoyable. Colonel



THE PRIEST WAS FOUND ELECTROCUTED WITH HIS BIBLE IN HIS HAND.



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Stapleton, an old acquaintance of mine, was one of the instructors, and he was evidently doing very useful work at the Staff School. At my opening address to those budding Staff Officers (having in my mind the indifferent staff work at Loos and elsewhere in France) I said, "Remember that the Staff Officer is the well-paid servant of the Regimental Officer." They were a delightful lot of fellows, and a very intelligent batch of officers.

The Resident lived in a regular palace of a place with a glorious garden of beautiful stone terraces and green lanes. English roses and rare Japanese plants clustered in prettily arranged groups round about this stone-pillared mansion. It reminded one of England, and was therefore delightful. Jelf was first Secretary to the Resident. Jelf had been at Eton with me, and he married the headmaster's (Dr. Warre's) grand-daughter. I stayed a night at their pretty bungalow. Bosanquet was a very highly esteemed and hard-working official, doing much good in the very large district over which he presided.

On the 12th February I stayed two nights at Agra. I visited the tomb Taj Mahal, where Shah Jahan and his consort were laid. The tomb with its surroundings is quite the most lovely and thrilling conception of beauty that I ever came across. It is so beautiful that it beggars description. The building was designed by an Italian.

Cruelty among the lower caste of Indian of all descriptions towards animals is well known, and towards his fellow-creature as a rule also, but that does not matter so much to the stranger. Whilst motoring through the Kutub village, a few miles outside Delhi, I saw a small dog which had in some way lost both its hind legs, and its mode of progression was one of the most pitiful and sickening sights I have ever seen. The rear portion of the little animal's body was a mere pulp, and the two remaining legs paddled along, dragging behind them this maimed and shocking deformity. I prayed that a little girl who sat at my side in the car had not seen it, but she had, and she must have dreamed of this horror for nights and nights. The dog should have been destroyed. On another occasion I saw a tiny donkey on the dusty, sunburnt road limping along with one broken foreleg. It had a sore on its withers the size of my hand. A crow was perched on the little sufferer's back feeding on the raw flesh. Luckily I had a revolver and I put the little beggar out of its misery.

There are too many cases of this sort.

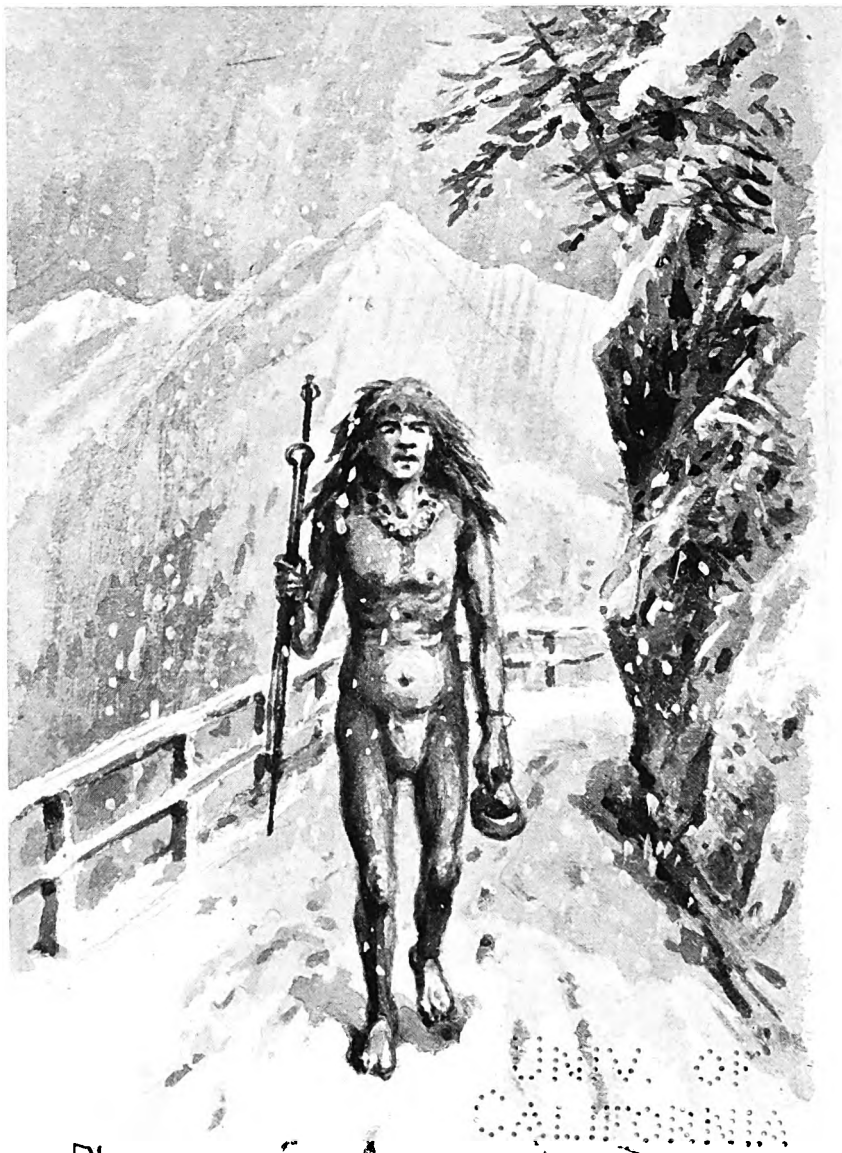
Major Wilson Johnston, General Staff Branch at A.H.Q., was Staff

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Officer and right hand to the Chief of the General Staff. He had been invalided from Mesopotamia. W. J., as we called him, insisted on my staying at his rooms, and he gave me the use of his motor-car whenever I was at Delhi. He had the wonderful knack of making one feel that to be able to help you was entirely to him a pleasure and nothing else : such was his great and warm-hearted kindness. W. J., by the way, was a well-known champion racquet player—"a good all-round man." Had it not been for his painstaking and his perseverance I doubt whether I should have received any pay at all whilst I was in India. The paying of a military officer in that country is one of the tragedies of the world, and the Pay Department forms one of the greatest cesspools of iniquity ; yet nobody is punished for this.

I held two practice camps at Tughlakabad, one a Horse Artillery camp, the other for Field Artillery. These camps were full of interest and passed off very satisfactorily. At the second camp I became ill and for ten days was obliged to lie up and get out of bed for parades only. There were several cases of dysentery in the camp. Later I was to have gone to Quetta to select a site for the permanent School of Gunnery, but I was too unwell to take the long and rather tedious journey across the Scind desert. After staying at Delhi two nights I entrained for Simla, and arrived there on the 5th March in a snowstorm. I endeavoured to get fit again up in these hills, but again fell ill whilst staying with Lady Kirkpatrick, the wife of the Chief of the General Staff. Thanks to the care of this kindest of women I became quite well in a week. Although I was far from well all the time I was staying with Lady Kirkpatrick, the recollection of this visit will always be associated with pleasant memories. Every day was spent in this peaceful atmosphere of gay laughter and gentle kindness. The good influence of such dear people travels far in such a country. Sir George Kirkpatrick, during my stay at this house, sailed for Mesopotamia to visit the troops who had been successful in the capture of Bagdad and rout of the Turks in that quarter.

Simla as a whole, all said and done, is as dusty and insanitary a place as it is possible for a native to make it. The view over the hills is very lovely. Rickshaws, the rough hill coolies, the little tumble-down bungalows perched on the steep Kud sides (most of the roofs falling in), all help to make Simla peculiar in its way. It is far from healthy, and if your home lies below the one main road and some way down the hill-side, it is ten to one other people's drains will come rattling down through your house



EM-1923.

THE SADHU IN THE SNOWSTORM.

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and garden. Epidemics of all descriptions, including small-pox, are too frequent. Five thousand rupees is the yearly rent for a tumble-down chalet.

Such was the seat of Government of the tin-hats, greatly to their discredit. But all this will be put right by the Chief and his Chief of Staff.

One day in a snowstorm I saw a priest trotting past absolutely naked except for the slimmest of loin bands (about three inches in width), with his hair reaching to his shoulders, a chilly attire, and Mrs. Grundy would have been annoyed. He looked so ridiculous and indecent that I shouted with laughter. Another recollection of Simla was pacing up and down the lawn with my hostess when presently we found ourselves almost entirely surrounded by a ring of grinning brown monkeys, who eyed us with grave suspicion.

On the 18th March I left Simla for Nowshera in preparation for the big skeleton artillery manœuvres which were to take place on the 28th and 29th March. Here I stayed with Colonel Grove, R.F.A., D.S.O., driving over most days to Akora, eight miles distant, at which familiar spot the operations were to take place. These consisted of an exhibition of artillery methods of preparing for an attack, and the system of communication to be adopted throughout a division in preparation for and during an attack. Major Casson, D.S.O. (Staff Officer to the Northern Army Commander), Major Sopwith, R.E., M.C., and I were responsible for all the arrangements and organization of the show. It was part of my job to write the divisional artillery orders for the Division taking part, and Casson drafted out the divisional orders. Sopwith constructed the trenches, redoubts, and machine-gun emplacements, which on the enemy side were actually dug. I selected positions for the whole of the divisional artillery : also positions for the observation stations of all the batteries and positions of artillery brigade headquarters. Although the operations represented a moving battle it was necessary for safety reasons to construct bullet-proof dug-outs for the observation posts, infantry brigade headquarters, battalion headquarters and machine-gun emplacements. Units throughout the Division were linked up by telephone. The front for which the Division was responsible was one thousand two hundred yards broad. The 28th March was spent in registration by batteries of all points in their zones which they considered necessary. The battle on the following day opened out with an intense bombardment on the enemy front trenches and redoubts ; subsequently the infantry

brigade commanders dealt with the various situations as the fight developed. Aeroplanes took an important part in the fight. A special train conveyed to Akora a large number of spectators, who represented probably every military centre in India, including Army Headquarters. There were twenty-three Generals present, including Sir Arthur Barrett, who presided as chief umpire. I was on the directing staff and remained with the C.R.A. during the show. It was so stage-managed that the divisional headquarters and spectators were on a hill looking down on the fight to a flank of the line of fire. These manoeuvres were considered very satisfactory and instructive. At the termination of the day's work a large conference was held, at which amongst others I was asked to say a few words on the operations in general. As the chief Ordnance Officer from Army Headquarters was present I took the opportunity of attacking this gentleman on the subject of the "cheap and nasty" equipment, such as telephones, etc., which were issued in India. This created an especial satisfaction amongst the long-suffering regimental officers who were present. The orders and arrangements had been very exhaustive, and at the end of the conference Sir Arthur Barrett was kind enough to express considerable thanks for our efforts. The Northern Army Commander, a tall, fine-looking soldier, besides being a sound officer, was full of extreme kindness, and the spark in his eye, with his tremendous sense of humour, was a thing not to be missed. That afternoon this assembly of officers scattered to the four winds, several travelled south by the special train, and I joined this party. The whole manoeuvres had called for considerable organization, and, when it was considered that batteries of artillery had to be called up from many quarters—infantry officers, pioneers, engineers, troops of cavalry, airmen; the digging of trenches, the construction of shelter proofs, erection of targets, ammunition, and a hundred and one details to be thought out, one can realize that in this terribly slow-moving country it required some effort to carry it through.

At Rawal Pindi I attended a conference of divisional artillery commanders, presided over by the Inspector-General of R.H. and R.F.A., and finally travelled south to Bombay, preparatory to embarking for England. Here I was obliged to wait six days for the mailboat in that perspiring city. There were 14,000 cases of plague and 2,300 deaths during that week.

Whilst in India I endeavoured all I knew to improve the issue of equipment out there; and with the backing up of General Johnson and



H. 1923

BROWN MONKEYS WHO EYED US WITH GRAVE SUSPICION.



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General Isacke, Director of Military Training, articles of equipment which should have been issued for use not months but years ago, and which had been hoarded up in the arsenals to the everlasting disgrace of those officers responsible, were forced out of their hiding-places and given to batteries. On leaving the country I wrote to the Director of Military Training the following, embodied in my report on the manoeuvres : " However highly trained our batteries are in this country, unless they are equipped with efficient tools they can never be good. Until the Ordnance Department and arsenals interest themselves on behalf of the artillery in India efficient shooting will never be attained. Younger and up-to-date officers having a knowledge of requirements from personal experience must be put in charge of these important departments. Senile decay has set in, and is responsible for the unpardonable stagnancy in our ordnance, and for our artillery not reaching the high level which we must insist on reaching even at the expense of removing these officers who are answerable for the present state of affairs."

What a good fellow Isacke was ! I think that when I told him that I considered him " human " he was immensely pleased. He was out to help everybody and always with delightful tact.

On my first appointment as Commandant of the School of Gunnery in India I had collected all my personal notes, the result of experience in the War in France, from the end of October, 1914, to August, 1916, during which period off and on I had been present in the Western Front in the firing line.

Artillery officers representing Headquarters R.A. of the Forces in Egypt and in Mesopotamia collected the notes I had arranged, so that I had been able to spread that teaching throughout three separate armies in my Indian tour.

The success attained at the School of Gunnery (which was once for all established in India) was largely due to the able assistance given me by the officers and N.C.O.'s on my staff.

Captain Martin, R.H.A., Lieutenants Theaker and Addis as assistant instructors worked admirably, and I could not have wished for more tactful and efficient fellows to help me.

I was well reported on by the Commander-in-Chief. It was the best and most gratifying report I had ever received—as a result of my labours in India.

This report, which might have helped me considerably as regards

promotion, etc., was pigeon-holed at W.O. and never brought to light until two years later, when it was too late to help me.

On arrival home I reported to the Director-General of Artillery.

This officer feigned ignorance of my mission to India, and the subject did not interest him. He told me that I was required for training at home, and that my promotion to Lieut.-Colonel, only a temporary one, would now cease, and that I would resume the rank of Major. It was useless to argue with this self-satisfied little god and to remind him that I had been assured by the A.A.G. at War Office, who appointed me Commandant, that on my reaching home I should again be allowed to return to a brigade in France.

I left Whitehall utterly disgusted and disheartened.

It was only by the friendship of the A.A.G. that a few weeks later I was again at the Front.

Come back from India, have you? Damn you—India!!!  
Never heard of it!!!



THE INTERVIEW AT WHITEHALL.

MIN. OF  
CALIFORNIA

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1944-1945

## PALESTINE, 1917-1918

### FOREWORD

**M**R. W. T. MASSEY has supplied us with a fine account of the Palestine Campaign, 1917-1919, in "How Jerusalem was Won" and "Allenby's Final Triumph," from information he was able to gather when out there—an official account.

The following very modest story of happenings during the battles up to Es Salt was written by the author in the firing line, and is a first-hand account.

Mr. W. T. Massey borrowed a few notes from this yarn, and the R.A. Commemoration Book also made use of extracts from the following story.

## PART IV

### PALESTINE, 1917-1918

**I**N August, 1917, I sailed for Alexandria *en route* to Palestine in charge of many officers and drafts of twenty-one different regiments. We travelled for ten days from Cherbourg to Taranto in the heel of Italy.

At Taranto the British Staff Officer in charge of the important base camp had not been wisely chosen, indeed he was at his worst, which is saying a good deal. Thanks to the staff arrangements, of which the less said the better, we lived for five days in abject misery. And, had we not been allowed to drive daily into the little seaside port of Taranto, should have died of starvation.

As it was I was obliged to leave many sick men behind at this camp, who had contracted malaria fever and other diseases due entirely to the sanitation, or rather the want of it. The whole business was a perfect scandal. Colonel "Scatters" Wilson, M.P., who was on his way to his Yeomanry regiment in Egypt, asked me to write a report on this filthy camp, which was a discredit to any army. This I did, addressing the report to Sir John Cowans, Q.M.G. Finally the Embarkation Officers endeavoured to overcrowd the ship *Heroic*, in which we were to sail for Alexandria. I carefully inspected the ship two days previous to our sailing, and pointed out to the staff that owing to one complete deck being condemned on medical grounds she could not carry any more than 550 troops. I was told that was nonsense.

On my refusing to sail as O.C. Ship unless they turned off 220 of the 720 crammed on board, I became most unpopular, the chief principle of the embarkation staff being to cram everyone possible on board and to get rid of them regardless of space or possible scarcity of food and water in the ship. I was surrounded by infuriated Staff Officers, owing to my refusal to sail until the excess number had been disembarked.

The Embarkation Officer informed me that the Commandant at

Taranto had sent a message by telephone telling me to mind my own business. I told him that that was exactly what I was doing, my business at that moment being to make sure that my men were not suffocated or starved.

This further incensed this insufferable Staff Officer, who saw all his hopes of packing us off pell-mell vanishing. He told me that Major-General Sir Richard — was in the Commandant's office and had himself telephoned up to ask who the O.C. Ship might be, and that he should be hanged at the yard arm.

The Staff Officer further added as a warning that Major-General Sir Richard — would be a traveller in my ship. He said that furthermore this General Officer would require the best cabin. However, on this point I enlightened the Staff Officer, saying that on no account could Sir Richard Cœur de Lion, or whatever his name was, be given the best cabin, as I should require this myself; nor was I, I added, particularly interested in the welfare of this creature who wished me hanged at the yard arm.

I then demanded to see the Superintendent Naval Officer, who at once most breezily agreed to disembark the 220 men, so taking the whole affair out of the hands of the military authorities.

Sir Richard — came on board, and on further acquaintance proved to be a good fellow, *heartily agreeing* with what I had done in defiance of the useless Staff at Taranto.

Young Fletcher acted as my Adjutant in my capacity of O.C. Trains and Ships outward bound, and very useful he proved to be. Curiously enough, he had previously worked with me for a few days on the Somme as Adjutant to the 87th Brigade, for which Brigade I had written the orders and made all arrangements for its advance at the opening of that battle.

After spending three days at Alexandria, a town I already knew in pre-war days, I was hurried up to the Palestine front to take command of a battery.

The army in Palestine required most careful and strenuous training for the campaign which was before us, as up till then these troops, many of them, had seen little enough of the real thing.

The officers I was destined to work with were of an exceptionally high order—many of them City men—shrewd, capable and brave.

The Commander of our group of guns, Colonel H. Bayley, an old H.A.C. officer, was energetic and courageous to a degree, whereas the



C.R.A. above him was an old woman. The latter returned home shortly after I joined the force.

Tel El Fara, the spot in which I found my battery by the side of a dried-up river bed, with its barren and desolate surroundings, could be well described as Dante's Inferno. Here the opposing forces were quite ten miles apart. Very few tracks crossed the big stretches of sand. It was necessary to have some knowledge of the stars in this weird country to find your way at night across miles of desert, and by day and night an oil compass was invaluable.

At this time the 60th Division made five reconnaissances of importance. These were carried out as follows :—

A screen of cavalry would go out in the early morning. At about 9 a.m. small parties of mounted officers under cover of the screen would ride out, each party having previously been given its task. The whole party of 300 or 400 officers would assemble at some point in the desert, and from there each group would ride off independently to its allotted area for reconnaissance.

These days entailed a ride of at least forty miles. As we approached the enemy positions, which consisted of series of trenches or sangars high up above the desert, commanding as they did the whole country to the west over which we worked, the Turk commenced shelling and sniping, so that it was far from pleasant reconnoitring for artillery platforms, the job we had been given to do, close under the enemy's strong defensive position. I remember on one occasion when the firing had been more active than usual, and we had not completed our task on account of the difficulty of further approaching the line of sangars which were manned by Turkish snipers, I took one subaltern with me and we rode at full gallop over the little brown hillocks. As we topped the rise of the next hillock we were met by a volley of bullets, one shaving my helmet, another between my horse's legs, until we were out of sight down the next slope. But the ground was tricky, and one could never be certain of being under cover of rifle fire, the country here being cut up into small rises ; also the possibility of being surrounded and cut off by Turkish cavalry kept us continually on the *qui vive*.

Then the long, weary march back through heavy sand in the moonlight told severely on the horses. And as we withdrew, covering twenty miles or more of desert, Turkish cavalry would cautiously issue forth and re-occupy positions they had temporarily withdrawn from, in place of our

cavalry, so that it was very necessary not to lose one's way on the home journey.

On the 21st October the 179th Infantry Brigade, commanded by Brig.-General —, marched boldly out into the desert land which formed No Man's Land. We accompanied this force. We marched at night, and by morning, 22nd October, had occupied the watering-places which existed between our main army and the Turk in front of Beersheba. We remained at Bir Esani for six days, and on the 28th October the remainder of the 60th Division reinforced us, and with the Anzak cavalry on our right we moved to Abu Galyon in preparation for the advance on Beersheba. On the night of the 31st the whole of Allenby's army moved for attack.

It was a bright moonlight night. Strict orders had been given for silence on the march, and every precaution made to render this approach march a complete surprise. It was ordered that all horses should be muzzled to prevent neighing. However, this order had to be moderated as regards draught horses drawing guns through heavy sand, nor did the muzzling of the "hairies" have the slightest effect, for they neighed as cheerily as ever.

I consider that this approach march, the occupation of troops to allotted areas, the selection of artillery platforms to positions previously reconnoitred by day under great difficulties, the organization of communications throughout the Division, etc., all to be completed before daylight, was one of the greatest achievements in this victorious campaign. I will explain, for instance, what my battery had to accomplish in the few hours available. The battery halted at a point on the old Moses road (Khalasa-Beersheba road), now in places covered by the drifting sand, and presently left the long, endless column which wound through the undulating desert like a snake, glimmering here and there with the flash of harness in the moonlight. From this point I led the battery to its appointed position through the intricate and trackless sea of hillocks which existed on each side of the old road; as the guns approached in line the suspecting Turk commenced rifle firing, and it seemed impossible that I should get my guns into position without casualties. We were now a few hundred yards from the enemy's position, and the noise of the gun teams and rumbling guns caused one considerable anxiety. Then the difficulty of recognizing in the weird moonlight the exact position to be occupied was considerable—the shape of the hills and rocks to be remembered after

the one fleeting reconnaissance of a few seconds under rifle fire which was all I had been able to make. Furthermore, the observation post had not been reconnoitred at all, nor had the enemy trenches, on to which I was responsible for bringing fire, been seen up to that time. And when it is remembered that an hour after dawn our infantry were to advance, and that by that time our guns must have registered and be prepared to make good those trenches—the task was no light one.

At streak of dawn young Philpott, one of my subalterns, and I were lying on the smooth hill-top, with a few stones heaped up in front of our heads as a shield, spotting out the enemy trenches on which we were to bear fire. Aerial photographs were the means of our recognizing our objectives (for every battery had been given its allotted trenches), and soon after daylight the British front was one blaze of gun fire, the registration of enemy trenches and strongholds having commenced. Unlike the front in France, there was very little wire to be cut. Just before our infantry left their trenches to attack we dropped a shell right on top of a machine-gun squad, killing the whole detachment—a lucky shot. We rated the front trenches until our infantry were within seventy yards of them, then lifted the fire on to the flying Turk. It was a great sight to see our fellows charge forward. All the time bullets spluttered on the hard ground round about us, one bullet removing a stone which screened my head. One poor fellow lay dead at our side, but casualties were few.

Swiftly we advanced the guns to a forward position, bivouacking that night beyond the trenches we had captured, and the same night Beersheba was entered by our infantry (the 179th Brigade), not by the Anzac mounted corp as was reported, who, however, arrived there after the taking of Beersheba by London troops, 60th Division.

The XXth Corps consisted of 60th, 53rd and 74th (Yeomanry) Divisions. The plan for the operations which had resulted in the capture of Beersheba and Gaza was as follows :—

The XXth Corps was to make the main attack, capture the former town and drive in the enemy's left flank, while the cavalry worked on the outer flank. The XXIst Corps and the Navy were to occupy the enemy's attention at Gaza during the early stages at the battle by a continuous bombardment followed by an attack on his defences between the sea and Umbrella Hill. This attack was timed to take place between the attack on Beersheba and the Kauwukah System in order to prevent the enemy reserves from moving against the XXth Corps during the second attack.

The attack on Beersheba commenced at dawn on October 31st from the south and south-west, and was undertaken by the 60th (London) and 74th (Yeomanry) Divisions. The 53rd Division and the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade were in position north of Saba Wadi to protect the left flank of the Corps, and demonstrated against the enemy trenches north of the Wadi. Advancing with the utmost gallantry, magnificently supported by our guns of all calibres, the 60th had actually carried the whole of the enemy's first line round Hill 1070 by half-past eight in the morning, and by 2 o'clock in the afternoon the two attacking Divisions had swept over the enemy's second line. The 74th Division then swung to their left and took all the enemy works to the north of the Wadi Saba. Meantime the cavalry had worked their way round to the north-east of the town to cut off the escape of the enemy, and captured some 1300 prisoners and eight guns. The town itself was entered by the 60th Division infantry just after sundown, and the water supply which was essential to the latter operations was secured with the assistance of the cavalry. The prisoners and booty of the XXth Corps, as the result of the day's operations, consisted of 25 officers and 394 other ranks with 6 field guns—these figures being exclusive of those captured by the cavalry.

On November 1st the 53rd (Welsh) Division moved to the north of Beersheba and was soon in touch with enemy in the mountains. The advance of the 60th and 53rd was apparently a great surprise to the enemy, who hurriedly collected portions of four Divisions to oppose them. The task of our Divisions from now and until the final breaking of the Turkish centre on November 6th was to hold off this large enemy force, which could only be achieved by continuous fighting under very difficult conditions. Owing to the necessity of building up a sufficient forward reserve of ammunition and supplies, and to the fact that a bad khamseen blew steadily for three days, the second phase of the operations could not be undertaken until six days after the capture of Beersheba.

Meanwhile the XXIst Corps had captured the whole of the enemy's first line at Gaza from Umbrella Hill to the sea, and were inflicting heavy casualties on the garrison by continuous bombardment and in the repelling of many counter-attacks.

Beersheba (or Bir es-seb'a) is, they say, one of the most ancient sites on record. Abraham here received his command to sacrifice Isaac. We descended the hills which lie to the west of the little town, crossed a wide, almost dried-up stony river-bed, by the side of which gorged-looking

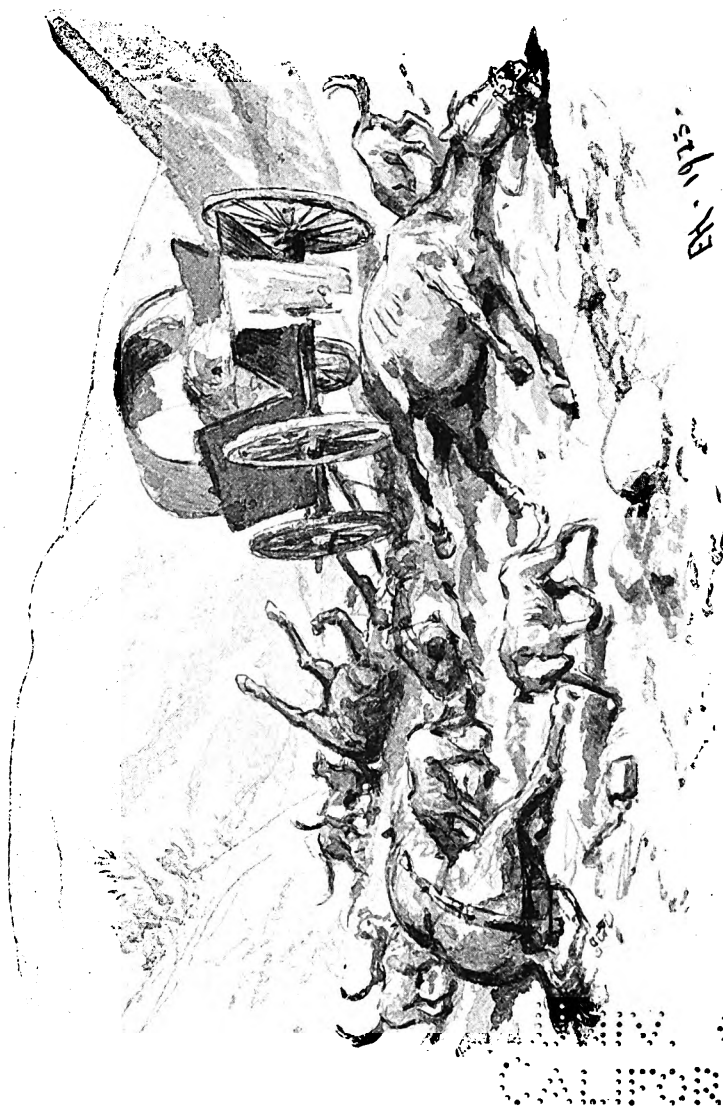
pariah dogs tore at the vitals of dead horses already distended by the hot sun. At the ford a Turkish wagon had failed to get away, and the two horses now lay dead with their heads in a pool of blood : a portion of the driver's garments hung over the tail-board. A steep incline led up from the dismal river-bed to the main street of Beersheba, a cluster of white square-built houses. A few scared Arabs and Bedouins cowered at the street corners as we approached. Water abounded in patches in the Wadi and in the town, as the modern Arabic name signifies, " Well of the Seven."

On Sunday, 4th November, the 60th Division made a forced march to Irgieg. Very severe going it was in a country where few roads existed, where any change in dispositions of movements of large columns of troops of all arms must be skilfully concealed, and where men raised large clouds of dust, crossing deep wadis and moving over tracks heavy with sand dust.

The second phase had as a main objective the water supply of Sharia, which involved the capture of the Kauwukah System of trenches, and was to be carried out by the 10th, 60th and 74th Divisions. At the same time the 53rd Division was to attack Tel el Khuteilfeh and protect the right flank of the XXth Corps. In the main attack everything depended on the progress of the 74th Division on the right, who had as a task the capture of all the enemy trenches on the east of the railway. These were strongly held by the enemy and bristled with machine guns, and in addition the attack had of necessity to take place over very open ground. The 74th, however, though only after very heavy fighting, captured all their objectives, taking many prisoners, twenty-three machine guns and eight guns ; and, with their right flank secured, the 60th and 10th Divisions quickly stormed the main Kauwukah System.

The 60th were then reorganized with the utmost rapidity and drove straight at Sharia with orders to protect the water supply and form a bridge-head. In doing this they experienced much opposition, but succeeded in securing their objectives by the following morning, capturing many prisoners and four more guns.

At dawn on November 7th the 10th Division was ordered to storm the Hapeira Tepe Redoubt. This work was of great natural strength, defended with numerous machine guns, and well supported by artillery, but fell to our attack after a sharp fight. This affair resulted in the capture of several guns, including two 5.9 Krupp howitzers of the latest type and quite undamaged, and in the securing of the all-important water supply.



GORGED-LOOKING PARIAH DOGS TORE AT THE VITALS OF DEAD HORSES ALREADY  
DISTENDED BY THE HOT SUN.

OF  
CALIFORNIA

TO YOU  
ABSORBED

The position on the 7th was that the enemy centre was pierced and a gap prepared for the cavalry. This result was due not only to the direct advance of the 10th, 60th and 74th Divisions but also largely to the resolution with which the 53rd Division beat off all attempts by the enemy to attack the right flank of the 74th Division. The enemy was therefore compelled to evacuate the fortress of Gaza, and our cavalry, with the 60th Division representing the XXth Corps as a flying infantry column, was enabled to be loosed after the enemy. The 60th fought hard during the night of November 6/7th, and during November 7th and 8th, and, combined with pressure by the XXIst Corps and our cavalry, the enemy was forced across the Wadi Hesi—abandoning in his precipitate retreat the munitions and stores which had taken him six months to collect.

The total capture reported of the XXth Corps up to November 8th consisted of about 72 officers, 1774 other ranks, 7 howitzers, 22 field guns, 1 A.A. gun, 7 trench mortars, 36 machine guns, several million rounds of S.A. and several thousand rounds of gun ammunition. The battle area had covered such a large extent of ground that no accurate count had been able to be made at that time.

On the night of the 6th, after a very heavy day's fighting, we found ourselves bivouacked behind a mound which overlooked Sharia railway bridge. It had been a hard day's work and a very successful one too. It was a fine sight to see batteries of artillery under heavy shell fire galloping into action in the open, and our infantry under the barrage fire seizing position after position with great gallantry. We had now come into open undulating country, in which a great field of view was given of the battle. I went forward alone to reconnoitre for a position. Whilst I lay down with my head just above the grass a Turkish battery chose this inopportune moment to register the very spot I was in, sending down three shells at a time. I was right in the fire, but escaped untouched. The Battery Commander on my left was shot through the leg. I had several narrow escapes that day.

On the morning of the 7th I got orders to advance my guns to Sharia railway bridge. We were in action by 7 a.m. I rode forward to reconnoitre, and found one of the battalion commanders in bad plight. Three enemy machine guns were annoying his headquarters. I told him I would bring one gun up to where we stood at the moment, within one thousand six hundred yards of a small white building in which the Turks had fixed up their machine guns, and would endeavour to knock the machine guns out.



Young Philpott galloped back and brought up one of his guns. An exciting moment. I directed the fire : shell after shell went hurtling into the building until we saw the detachments flying out behind, when we raised the fire on to their retreating forms. That night the three deserted machine guns were in our hands.

But this was only the beginning of one of the busiest days I remember. Except for one other battery of our own Brigade, all the other batteries of the Division had failed to put in an appearance, so that we were doing the work of three Brigades. I chose my observation station on the summit of a big mound by the Sharia railway bridge, which commanded the country north and west. The Turks, whom we could see on the far ridge, repeatedly attempted to counter-attack. Every time their front wave rose to charge, our six guns ripped salvo after salvo into them, so that they could not move. When later we took that ridge, the tale was easily told, for the dead lay thick in their ranks. I was obliged to cover with my guns 120 degrees of front, and fire was called for from 7 a.m. until it was dark. The hardest day I remember, and a sad one too, for although we were again victorious, for my battery it was at great cost.

One of the brigadiers brought all his staff close to my observation post, and they were crowded together on a shelf which projected on the side of the mound just below the summit. A battery of 5.9, manned by German gunners, came into action and shelled our mound frightfully, sending down groups of twenty and thirty shells right on to us. As they came plunging down the noise was deafening, and the shrieks of desperately wounded men was heart-breaking. Ten poor fellows within a few feet of where I lay were killed outright, and many others were dreadful to look at. My wagon line was situated in a deep wadi shielded from view by the mound. However, it did not escape. I ran to the edge of the mound and looked down. A pitiful sight to see the horses—twelve killed, and others, poor dumb beasts, standing in their ripped harness with blood dripping from terrible wounds. Twenty-six precious horses rendered useless. I shouted orders to the mess cook, who, with his assistant, both absolutely indifferent to danger, were turning over the still, unrecognizable forms who lay alongside their horses and wagons. I recommended the mess cook and his mate for bravery, but too many names of Staff Officers, recommended for God alone knows what, jostled their names out of the list. I lost twenty-five fellows that day. Hastily directions were given, and, in spite of all the chaos, what remained of the wagon line was swiftly

moved up the river-bed to a safe place before another storm of 5·9 shells came on us again. It was a wonder that anything lived on this mound. Major Price, a howitzer battery commander, and I found ourselves lying flat on a dead Turk in a shallow trench on top of the mound. That night we advanced and bivouacked round our guns in action on the ground we had wrested from the Turks. Next day was a running fight. We had left the Wadi Sharia where in ancient days the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac fed their flocks as the Bedouins do still. We moved abreast of the infantry, dropping our trails and shelling ridge after ridge. The whole operation called for swift work at the guns; hurried advances, a section of guns thrown forward and flung into the firing line. The motto was "Push on," at all costs. It was a great sight to see the whole Division moving on and on: the attacking waves, the Battalion Headquarters about two hundred yards behind, followed by camel transports, the camels led by Egyptians in their long blue gowns—and so on—ever moving on over, at times, shell-swept areas; nothing could stop these moving waves of men and animals. In spite of the worn-out horses and the tired men, I found myself right up forward with one section hurried into action in our attempt to catch the now flying Turk, whom we could see away in the distance, retreating down a wadi. Enemy guns were firing a short distance ahead of us. Behind me I heard a roar, and looking back I saw two British squadrons of Yeomanry, with swords drawn, charging *ventre à terre* behind my two guns in action. The leader shouted to me, and I gave him the direction of where the enemy guns appeared to be. So they swept on over the open grass hills, taking the hostile guns in flank. When, a few minutes later, I limbered up and crossed the next low ridge it was a wonderful sight presented to us: three German 77 mm. batteries (twelve guns) in line, one battery surprised on the left flank with every gun pointing directly over its neighbour, all the gunners lying round their guns, some clinging on to wheels, other limp forms flung over the guns. All was silence, because Death reigned supreme. A German officer was on the right flank with his head slashed nearly off, with revolver still in his hand. All about British Yeomanry were lying huddled alongside horses with gaping wounds, the helpless beasts waiting to be put out of pain. The guns had fired point blank at the charging mass. It was here that Colonel Borton (serving at that time in the 2/22nd London Regt.) won his V.C. That was at Huj.

British Yeomanry in this campaign were splendid. Traditions of all sorts, regimental or otherwise, are little thought of in these days. Indeed

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the ceaseless rush after wealth or votes or other colourless pursuits allows no time for the hustler of every class to pause in his strife for prominence (or doubtfully earned reputation) and to consider how it was that England won her prowess in the old days and how she still wins her laurels in unrecorded corners. It seems no part of the Recorder's duties (whoever the Recorder may be) to remind us occasionally that England's renown all the world over for fair play, for chivalry, indeed for her finer points, is the result of *traditions and customs* handed down to us for generations. The fair name we still hold to-day is chiefly due to Britain's loyal subjects, sailors, soldiers and civilians doing their bit unheard of, many of them living their lives in the far outposts of empire, spreading their influence and justice amongst their fellow-subjects of many races, for ever conscious of our great heritage. The real source of all that is splendid in this nation originated early in our history with the solid foundation and backbone of Great Britain, i.e. the country-bred squires, the great and little owners of land, and their yeomen dependents who worked in their cause and loved them : alas ! a breed fast vanishing. It was these men, not only in their example of loyalty to king and country, but also in their fighting qualities, who rode as Crusaders to the Holy Land under Richard Cœur de Lion ; lords and retainers, who, master and man, from Nottingham and Warwick, Dorset and Gloucester, and other counties, again in this War fought side by side against the enemies of England. It is an actual fact that there were instances in Palestine, in that brisk affair at Huj, of squires and their yeomen, both descendents of those former Crusaders, riding knee to knee for those guns.

Young Philpott was my right hand all through these operations, a brave lad, and I recommended him for gallantry, for which he was awarded the Military Cross.

That night we rested a few miles from Huj. The staff arrangements for water do not bear recording. Our drivers and horses trekked for twenty-three miles through the night in search of wells. This, after marching and fighting all day. Fifty-three hours had elapsed before we were able to water the animals. When finally the worn-out gun teams reached a watering-place, many of them fell down exhausted at the wells. The question of water was a cause of great anxiety. It was only through the extreme courtesy of General Bulfin, commanding the XXIst Corps on our left, that I was able at that late hour to water my horses. How I blessed the old soldier, in whose area I was poaching, for his kindly



BRITISH YEOMANRY, WITH SWORDS DRAWN, CHARGING *ventre à terre*.

TO THE  
LIBRARY

consideration. My brother in the Rifle Brigade had been his Brigade Major in the first days of the War when General Bulfin landed the first British force on French soil.

On the 13th November the 60th Division marched to Nejileh (or Eglon of the Bible). Nejileh, once a city of Judah, lies on open down land, and formed an excellent camping ground. But we were not to stay there long, as it was considered that we were now too far to a flank and isolated from the remainder of the XXth Corps. So we received orders to return to Sharia by way of Abu Dilakh. This constant moving greatly delayed supplies, and sometimes we were very hungry, and horses, who had suffered from long marches, were on short rations.

The battlefield of Sharia on which we camped was sprinkled with dead men and horses unburied, so that the flies became a plague; at moments the back of one's jacket and one's cap were black with flies, and, although we were always hungry, food was an abomination in these surroundings.

On the 19th November we became a flying column to pursue the Turk up to Jerusalem. Our first march brought us to Ali el Muntar, the hill on which Samson is said to have carried the gates of Gaza. We were bivouacked in a great plain to the east of this hill. Rain storms commenced here. We then marched to Rab el Wad in four days, more or less hugging the west coast as far as El Mejdal, from thence in a north-east direction to Rab el Wad, shifting camp each night and covering about fifty miles in that period. Here we remained four nights at the entrance to the mountain range of Judah.

Bulfin's Corps had already, after severe fighting, forced the mountain pass ahead of us with his Ghurka Rifles, some of whom were seen in the thick of the fight, having lost their knives, hurling rocks at the enemy and charging on. This road led finally over the mountains to Jerusalem, twenty miles further east. The long column advanced up the pass with its steep and very long gradient, a severe pull up for the worn gun teams, now chiefly consisting of mules; on either side rocky banks and terraced slopes, here and there clumps of olive trees. This wild glen is called Wadi Ali. At the top of the pass a glorious view presented itself of the Plain of Sharon and the blue Mediterranean away to the west.

On arrival at Enab (or El'Anab), "the village of grapes," on the 27th November, we were once more in action up in the rocky hills beyond the Wadi Ghoreb (or Ravens' Valley, "raven" of the Bible meaning "thieves").

Here we found the enemy in a very strong defensive position in front of Jerusalem. We remained in this position immediately in front of the Jerusalem position for nine days.

One day I visited the little church of St. Jeremiah in the valley at the foot of Enab ; it is reported to be the most beautiful specimen of Crusading work existing in the Holy Land. Christ is said to have bathed His feet in the little well close by. The building was erected in the year 1140. Here we were able to get barrels of good red wine.

On the 7th December we took up an advanced position on the Kustal ridge, opposite the Turkish defences covering Jerusalem. Neby Samwal, the ancient Mispheh of Benjamin, was the key of the enemy's position, and gave us considerable trouble. Its mosque, standing as it did on a high peak, was conspicuous from every side, and was strongly held by the Turks. The ancient mosque, dating from 1157, was utterly shattered by shells from both sides, British and Turk, and the dead lay thick round about this stronghold. At Kustul we remained two nights, and it was from here we fought the battle which ended in the taking of Jerusalem. Neby Samwal changed hands two or three times and was only taken after desperate fighting. The rugged Kustul ridge overlooked a very deep, broad glen in which lay the village of Ain Karim (where in a grotto John the Baptist was born), and, just below the mosque of Kustul, the village of Kolonieh clung to the side of the ravine. The prospect from our steep ridge, four thousand feet above sea level, was wild, barren and majestic in the extreme. On the opposite ridge, with the broad valley between, the Turks were entrenched ; machine guns well posted guarded the approaches up the very steep-sided ravines which led to Jerusalem.

It fell to my lot to be the first British soldier in Jerusalem. Just after 8 a.m. on the 9th December I found myself at the Jaffa Gate. The following is an account of the actual surrender of the Holy City, which fell before the 60th (London) and 53rd (Welsh) Divisions.



THE SURRENDER OF JERUSALEM HANDED TO THREE ARTILLERY OFFICERS.



70. 1911  
1911.10.10

## PART V

### THE TAKING OF JERUSALEM

**A**T 8 o'clock in the morning of the 9th December, 1917, the Mayor of the city and the Chief of Police offered to surrender the City of Jerusalem to three artillery officers. This was accepted.

The M.G.R.A. in Palestine asked me to write an account of what actually happened on the 9th December, on which day Jerusalem fell.

There seems to be some considerable controversy on the part of one or two officers of high rank on the subject as to who first entered Jerusalem. As regards my individual claim to be the first man to enter Jerusalem, it is difficult to recognize any particular credit to be attached to this fact. Nor is it of any great interest except possibly to the individual concerned.

The first formed party to enter the town arrived at my urgent request—a mounted party of gunners, consisting of Colonel Bayley, commanding 303rd Brigade R.F.A., two artillery subalterns, and seven armed artillerymen. Brig.-General Watson, commanding the 180th Infantry Brigade, accompanied this party, followed half an hour later by one company of the 180th Infantry Brigade, 60th Division, which I also asked for to keep order in the town. Between the hours of 10.30 a.m. and 11 a.m. the 53rd Division entered the town from the south-west, along the Bethlehem road past the Jaffa Gate, very soon after the arrival of the infantry company (180th Infantry Brigade).

The surrender of Jerusalem was handed to Colonel Bayley in my presence by the Mayor of Jerusalem at a point about a mile and a quarter from the city gates. Previous to this, Major W. C. Beck, 301st Brigade R.F.A. (later killed in the Jordan valley), and Major F. R. Barry, 302nd Brigade R.F.A., had made their way to the outskirts of the town and had met the Mayor with his white flag of truce. Here is the little story, such as it is :—

The 60th Division had been given the task of capturing the very

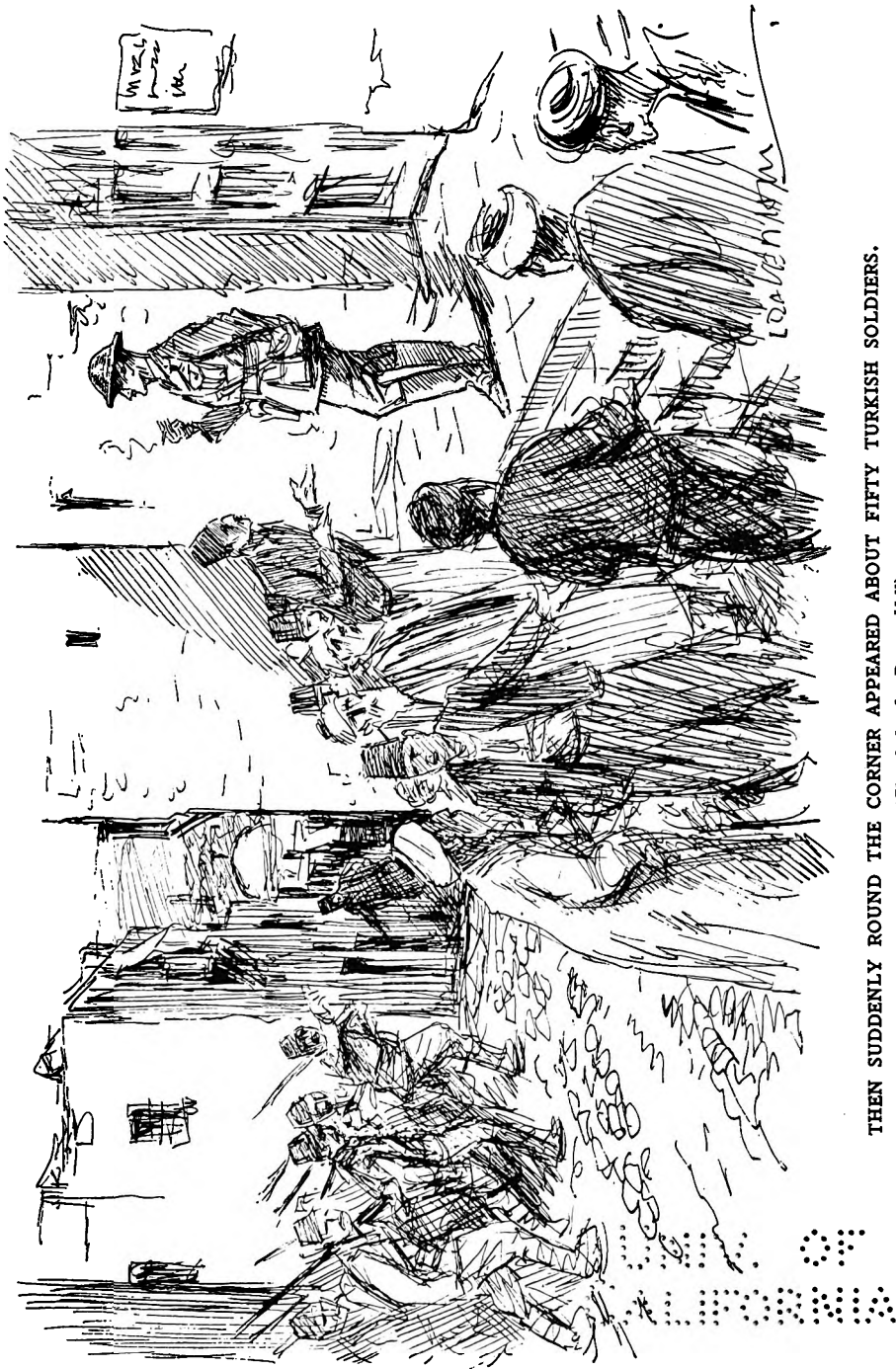
strong position immediately west of Jerusalem, which included Ain Karim, Deir Desin and Kulonieh Trench Systems. This position should have been impregnable. The natural features of this absurdly strong defensive position afforded the enemy every advantage. 303rd Brigade guns were posted in a position under cover of the Kustul Ridge, near two trees which marked the sky line, immediately south of the mosque, about four thousand feet above sea level.

The 8th of December was spent covering our infantry in their assault on, and fine advance up, the mountains on the opposite side of the Kulonieh valley. That night it poured with rain and blew a gale of wind, and when we remembered that two nights ago it had taken us, thanks to the swampy ground and severe climb up to our position, eight hours, i.e. all through a soaking night, to reach Kustul, it seemed to us, as we shivered in the storm, the unbearable last straw that our advance next morning might be hindered and perhaps made impossible by another wet night. However, at daybreak on the 9th, we succeeded in unearthing two guns ; two others refused to move ; the third section of my battery I had fortunately kept close to the main Jerusalem-Enab road, and with this last one we moved off down to Kulonieh, leaving the other four guns to follow as soon as they could be pulled out of the soft ground.

Then on foot, with one subaltern, the Group Commander (Colonel Bayley) and Major Price, we faced the zigzag Roman road which leads to Jerusalem and runs parallel to the Lifta high road, a tremendous pull up for the tired horses. The Lifta-Kulonieh high road was fully exposed to the north, and it appeared at this stage of the operations out of the question to make use of it ; hence the reason for our taking this precipitous track.

Anticipating every moment that we should be met with machine-gun fire and shells, we trudged warily up this steep road, followed by the only gun left, with its eight thin horses, which had survived the camel-blocked descent from Kustul.

Thus it was that, meeting no opposition and seeing none of our infantry, we reached the top and found ourselves not rushed into a bloody fight, but taking a very lovely sunny Sunday morning walk towards the outskirts of Jerusalem. Presently we saw a crowd of women and children led by an official carrying a white flag of truce. This individual turned out to be the Mayor of Jerusalem with his entourage of Arab police and laughing girls. Colonel Bayley was formally handed over the papers which purported to be the entire surrender of Jerusalem to the British.



THEN SUDDENLY ROUND THE CORNER APPEARED ABOUT FIFTY TURKISH SOLDIERS.  
(Sketch by L. Raven Hill)

TO VMD  
APPENDIX

Colonel Bayley and the Mayor were at once photographed by an American, who also acted as interpreter. The Mayor then pointed out the importance of having the Post Office taken over immediately and of using all necessary precautions to ensure communication with the enemy being cut off. Bayley requested me to do this forthwith.

Leaving the gun and its detachment halted on the road, I took with me an Arab policeman mounted on a grey pony, and my orderly, no one else being available at that time.

At 8.20 a.m. I started to ride into Jerusalem, about a mile and three-quarters distant. As I reached it and rode through the streets the policeman shouted wildly that the British were already coming. People at once appeared from nowhere, running and shouting and waving their hands in welcome. I rode towards the Jaffa Gate to the house of Hussein Selim, the Head of Municipality, and demanded the keys of the Post Office. I explained in French to this official that I was the Chief of Police of the British Army now entering the city (a subterfuge which at this stage I considered advisable). I required, I said, every Arab policeman to be made available at once. My orders would be implicitly obeyed: if from this time any communication with the enemy continued he knew what punishment to expect; all employees at the Post Office to assemble at that place; the house to be surrounded while I searched. These orders were carefully attended to, and well carried out by the Arab Chief of Police, who had arrived on the scene.

Then I turned up the street through a dense, cheering crowd which had to be forced back by a number of Arab policemen who had settled all round me like flies from goodness knows where. I searched the Post Office, and placed a policeman over one room in which were cupboards of stamps and official books. I found all wires cut. The employees were all herded into one room. Then I came out of the building to find the Place in front of the Post Office filled with hundreds of uneasy faces awaiting the next move.

Here I stood on the doorsteps for two hours anxiously watching for British troops. The whole Place and streets leading therefrom were now choked with a sea of faces of every hue, and I appeared to be the centre of interest. Every time I lit a fresh cigarette, or sipped another cup of coffee, the crowd cheered. I spoke to many officials in French.

A woman of Russian descent ran out from the crowd and wept on my shoulder tears of joy, or possibly sorrow, it was not clear which. She

mumbled out a story of her father being dragged off, insufficiently clothed, by Turks to Jericho, at the same time expressing considerable relief at the sight of a British soldier at last.

Scenes such as this succeeded each other in rapid succession, and "His Excellency," as I was dubbed, had to deal with variously assorted deputations, and further weeping women. Coffee on silver trays was brought to me at intervals, the period of suspense and anxiety being a long one.

Still no British Army arrived. After the first hour of waiting an Arab gentleman asked me why the British did not arrive, as the people were becoming uneasy, and the Turks were still in the town. I told him that in good time they would be here, and said that even now the British guns were just up the road. An hour and a half went by, still no sign of British troops.

The Mussulmans were showing signs of unrest—why did the British not come? Could I possibly send and ask for a display of troops of some sort? They could not answer for any trouble, as the people had been worked up to a state of uncertainty. I reassured a well-dressed Arab who spoke to me, and asked him why the need of hurry, and added that presently I should require breakfast. At once a man was despatched to prepare breakfast for His Excellency.

Then suddenly round the corner appeared about fifty Turkish soldiers in file, led by their officers. It was with the utmost relief that I saw them turn the corner after they had marched past me, appearing to ignore my presence there.

Then another Russian woman, about sixty years old, came forward out of the crowd and solemnly made me an offering of a newly baked cake. This woman, it was whispered in my ear, had been starving for many days. She would wish to show, in this manner, her gratitude for being delivered out of the hands of the Turk by the British. I bowed, broke a crumb of the warm cake, and placed it in my mouth, handing her back the food; this caused a murmur of approval from the crowd.

Finally, after waiting for just on two hours, I whispered to my horseholder to ride slowly past the crowd, then, when clear, to ride hard up the road and to find an officer of artillery or infantry and tell him of the urgent necessity of having troops at once in the city. This he did, and in about forty minutes General Watson, commanding 180th Infantry Brigade, rode down with Colonel Bayley and an escort consisting of one of my sergeants



A RUSSIAN WOMAN CAME FORWARD OUT OF THE CROWD WITH AN OFFERING  
OF NEWLY BAKED CAKE.



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and six armed gunners with two subalterns of artillery. The welcome we received at all hands was a sincere one. "Is it really true that we shall be under British rule? God be praised, etc., etc." A few minutes later the 53rd Division swung up the Bethlehem road.

I handed over the Post Office to the military police of the 53rd Division, then, mindful of my breakfast, rode away to the house of a rich Arab, where a sumptuous meal was rapidly eaten in the presence of probably twenty relations of the owner, including a grandmother and many grandchildren and aunts, most of whom had for days been hiding in the cellars and caves. Indeed, many friends met outside the Post Office while I was there who had been hiding for thirty days, and fell on each other's necks in their gratitude to God, or to the British, or possibly to both, for their delivery from the Turk and the damp caves.

All was not yet over, because as I left the Arab's house a shrieking Nun rushed at me, imploring help, saying in French that Turkish soldiers were ransacking the church opposite the nunnery, which also was threatened, so she said. So I rode on, and found four Turks in the act of filling a cart with church property. They threw up their hands (they were unarmed) when they saw me, and I marched them off, riding back and handing them over to the first infantry officer I came across. Afterwards, with the help of this officer, I placed guards on the church, nunnery and other buildings near by.

Sergeant Lawrence, one of my Nos. 1, had formed one of the party to come down with General Watson, and, when I sent him back at Watson's request to bring up hurriedly one infantry company, he met on his way, at the corner of a small street, twelve unarmed Turks. These he took charge of, signing to them to remain where they were until he returned. *This they did*, and a little later were marched off by the infantry company. This totalled sixteen prisoners.

I rejoined my battery just as we had orders to move north, and at the outskirts we dropped our trails and shelled the ridge to north-west of the Mount of Olives, where for a time the Turk offered stubborn resistance—meeting bayonet with bayonet. From the guns we could see the Turks running along the wall, behind which they attempted to re-form. We shelled the wall heavily with H.E. and low bursts of shrapnel, at short range, while the infantry advanced up the slope. A pretty fight.


During the rather difficult time in Jerusalem one Issa Mousabek, a Syrian, assisted me as interpreter. It was with his kindly help that I was

able to reassure the many worn and anxious people about me. The deputations of old creatures, Arabs, Jews, Syrians, hysterical women (some German), men of importance, many of none ; to all their anxious enquiries as to the safeguarding of persons and property I answered that from now they were under British rule—there was no need for anxiety ; British rule was a fair and just one, no harm would come to them and theirs. One could see the instant relief in their tired faces—even tears of gratitude.

During these days we put up in a Jew's house, and were supplied with good food and red wine, wine of the country, by Issa Mousabek, who helped us in very many ways. Later, when we were in action far out in the rocky hills, this Syrian sent out donkeys laden with vegetables as a present for the battery. Both Syrians and Jews were very grateful to us for their deliverance from the Turk.

PART VI

OPERATIONS NORTH OF JERUSALEM

N December 13th we took up an advance position at Shafat (or Nob, where David ate the Shew-bread), in the cold driving rain, with the guns nestling among great boulders. In this bleak spot, in action on high ground four miles north of Jerusalem, we remained till the 27th. The 53rd Division extended from Bethlehem to the Mount of Olives on our right, and the XXIst Corps on our left carried on the line up to the coast.

There was some very hard fighting with the Turk, who frequently counter-attacked, before we again shifted him off his strong position in these hills.

On December 28th we pursued the enemy, marching all night and fighting all through the next day, when our infantry stormed the important position of Ram Allah.

The artillery did good work that day, concentrating their fire on strong points and fairly hurling the enemy off his perch at Bireh, the ancient Beeroth, where Joseph and Mary discovered the loss of Jesus. This position was taken with great determination by the 60th Division, who indeed in this campaign had undoubtedly won their laurels and the admiration of all. In later days I heard a General style this Division "the Immortal 60th." Right up to May, 1918 (and probably after), the 60th bore the brunt of the fighting. It is sad to think that, just before I left this Division for home, only two officers and one man of the artillery brigade in which I served had been awarded medals, an unfair proportion of rewards for good work. Our infantry brigade and battalion commanders were always openly grateful to us, and told us they could do nothing without the guns. But the higher infantry commanders and G.H.Q. in Palestine had no love for their artillery, and we were continually made to realize this fact. To adapt Kipling :—

It was "Gunner this, and Gunner  
That, and Gunner go away."  
But it's "thank you, Mr. Gunner"  
When the Guns begin to play.

Sometimes we were very cold and wet these days, and this marching over mountainous country told terribly on the horses and mules. Probably the camels, unused to the cold winds and slimy tracks, suffered the most. Some thousands of camels died of exposure to the winter storms, and very many had to be destroyed as a result of broken legs.

I can see again the distressing sights in those bleak hills : dead camels by the side of the road ; deserted wagon lines where a horse, unable from starvation and sheer weakness to drag its gun out of the bog, lay dead, half buried in the mud ; the ghastly grin of a dead Turk, whose body lay across the track, which horrid mess the gun wheels of every gun failed to avoid, and the grinning head rocked backwards and forwards as the wheels again squashed over the lacerated corpse.

The following telegrams were forwarded for the information of all ranks :—

*From the Corps Commander to General Shea, 60th Division.*

“ It is a fitting reward for the splendid work of your gallant Division since the commencement of operations that the honour of receiving the surrender of Jerusalem should have fallen to them. My heartiest congratulations to you and them.”

*From General Shea to the Corps Commander.*

“ The whole Division is greatly honoured and touched by your most kind message. You can rely on us to go all out for you whenever you order.

A. C. TEMPERLEY,  
Lieut.-Colonel,  
General Staff.”

*December 10th, 1917.*

Christmas at Shafat had been a most unpleasant experience. There, high up amongst the rocks, we were entirely exposed to the bitter cold of a sleet storm. All through the day and following night we stood in the driving rain and sleet : no bivvy could withstand the hurricane.

At 8 o'clock that night we thought of roast turkey, plum pudding and a roaring fire as we sat shivering under a tarpaulin, soaked to the skin. The tarpaulin had a large rent across it, and it was a feat of no ordinary difficulty to prevent the bully beef and biscuits from being entirely submerged : and all the time the water trickled down our necks.

In addition to this, telephone messages kept coming in to say that the Turk was threatening to counter-attack, so it was not altogether a happy Christmas. Five of my men were taken to the field ambulance next morning so numbed with cold that they could not move, and were carried away.

On January 2nd, 1918, the artillery of the 53rd Division relieved our artillery at Bireh, and our guns were ordered to come into action on the Mount of Olives facing east. The defensive line at this time faced east and north. In the east from Bethlehem to Rummon, and in the north a line running from Bireh to Jaffa and the coast.

The question of suitable positions for the 18-pounder gun was not an easy one in this mountainous country, where big angles of descent had to be juggled with clearance of crest. The howitzers presented no such difficulties. The howitzers of both field and mountain brigades were the favourite weapons, although, for occasional wire cutting and rapid fire, barrage work and so on, the field gun had its uses.

I was required to conduct the firing of one of the 53rd Division batteries in support of an attack north of Bireh, therefore I did not join my own battery on the Mount of Olives until two days later, when I found both men and horses snugly billeted in a convent—the horses in warm rooms on the ground floor. However, owing to bugs, which infested the building, literally crawling up the walls in regiments, we were obliged to vacate many of the rooms.

The disgusting state of the place was no doubt the result of Turkish soldiers having lately occupied the convent, or possibly of Nuns; many of them, I imagine, from their appearance and habits, were most unsavoury.

A great sense of humour goes far in troublous times. My Sergt.-Major Barnes in gloomiest moments throughout the operations always somehow seemed to see the comic side of every tragedy. Curiously enough he was by profession an actor, chiefly taking parts in Shakespearian plays. I never wish for a better sergeant-major, and he was absolutely fearless. It takes all sorts to make a world—or nowadays an army—and one of the finest infantry charges I saw in Palestine was led by a dentist.

On January 9th I assumed temporary command of the 301st Field Artillery Brigade in the absence of Colonel Thatcher.

During this period I made several long reconnaissances for battery positions in the bleak hills. We had a successful raid on Mukhmas, a corner of the world, rugged, stony and barren in the extreme. A deep


ravine with precipitous sides divided this village from the surrounding hills, the village itself being approached only by mountain paths.

It was at this uninviting spot that Jonathan and his armour-bearer attacked the Philistine garrison of Michmash.

As a result of the Government biscuit, on which we ruined our teeth, I was obliged to attend a dentist in Jerusalem. The dentist, however, being short-sighted or possibly in a hurry, pulled out the wrong tooth. I suffered great pain, and, had the dentist next morning not departed for England, he would also have suffered great pain, but I failed to catch him, and two days later proceeded to Cairo to try my luck with another dentist. Here I remained ten days, a part of which I spent at Mena House, close to the Pyramids. The warm sun and fine desert air I much appreciated.

## PART VII

### OPERATIONS EAST OF JERUSALEM

N February 13th, 1918, I assumed command of the 303rd Field Artillery Brigade, the Brigade in which I had commanded a battery in the previous operations. My headquarters were now in Jerusalem. The following days were spent with my battery commanders in long and careful reconnaissances. The country over which we were to operate was difficult, a sea of hills and deep ravines with the one road running through them for twenty-five miles to Jericho.

On February 19th operations commenced for securing the Jebel Kuruntul-Khurbah-Kukun-Rugh, Esh Shemaliyeh line. I commanded the centre group consisting of other artillery brigades in support of the 180th Infantry Brigade.

The batteries were so grouped that we were able to concentrate fire on the enemy's strong positions, and later on, by pushing guns forward, were able to assist the infantry on our right, whose artillery, owing to difficult country, had failed to come up. My battery commanders did splendid work and showed great energy and skill in the handling of their guns.

Early on the 20th I hurried up the Jericho road with a section of 18-pounders and a subaltern in charge. Finding a bridge on the Jericho road blown up, we unhooked the teams, and with the assistance of sixty men belonging to the 2/20th London Regiment (commanded by Ward Aldham of the Coldstreams), dragged the guns bodily down into the wadi and up the other side, and hurried into action in time to render much needed assistance to the infantry who were held up immediately south of the Talat ed Dumm Castle. In the meantime my howitzer battery D 303, commanded by Major Price, came to the rescue of the 2/19th Londons on the left. The remainder of my artillery searched the hills beyond. After an intense bombardment, lasting the best part of an hour and a half, our infantry stormed the next hill and took it.

The marching and fighting had called for considerable skill on the part



of the infantry working over difficult ground, against naturally strong defensive positions, on which the Turks had dug themselves in.

Young Philpott and I rode forward to Talat Ed Dumm. We climbed up the almost perpendicular bank which rose sheer up about four hundred feet above the Jericho road. At the top two of our machine guns were firing, and there was a tremendous din and whirl of rushing men and screams of bullets. We ran across an open grass slope and knelt down behind the machine guns. Here we could see the Turks on the rise about three hundred yards beyond.

On this position Philpott brought his battery to bear, standing up for an hour observing, fully exposed to fire. He was obliged to stand owing to the difficulty of observation and communication. A fine officer, full of initiative and pluck.

That night, after this victorious day, we bivouacked on the Talat Ed Dumm position, which we had captured.

It is on the Talat Ed Dumm, or "Ascent of Blood" (called so from the colour of this rock), position that the Good Samaritan Inn building stands. The inn was a refuge in Biblical days from the "ravens," or thieves, who infested the valley below.

On February 21st we continued our advance towards Jericho. The 180th Infantry Brigade moved along the high peaks parallel to the main Jericho road. I ordered the main portion of my artillery to cover this advance, and, taking a section of guns with me, moved along the road abreast of the infantry.

In the meantime the Anzak Mounted Brigade had worked forward on our right, and by 8 a.m. had entered Jericho.

As there was now no opposition, I rode forward with my orderly down the steep track in places hewn out of the rocks. Suddenly, round the corner of the winding track, the plains of Jericho far below came into view, and the little village of Jericho half-way between these mountains and the Jordan river, its white minaret and collection of mud huts standing out against the vivid green beyond.

The intensely blue Dead Sea lay like a mirror to the south ; and in the background the dark hills of Moab.

Across the open plains moved troop after troop of cavalry, all converging on Jericho, the bright sun flashing on swords and harness. Colonel Henry, an Australian, attached to Headquarters Staff, joined me, and we rode on towards Jericho.

When we got down to the plains we were about two miles ahead of our infantry, and here joined in with the cavalry, the enemy shelling us as we approached the village. We had breakfast by the viaduct which crosses the Wadi Kelt, and then rode into Jericho. By this time (9.45 a.m.) General Chater, commanding the Anzac mounted troops, rode up and asked me to give him some guns, as his artillery had failed to come up. So I at once sent back for a section of 18-pounders to operate with the Anzacs. The infantry had orders to remain in the hills overlooking Jericho, the cavalry remaining in touch with the enemy, who had withdrawn to the line of the River Jordan.

Although it was comparatively cool at this time, as many men and horses as possible were kept in the hills owing to the conditions of climate in the Jericho plain, with its unnatural depression of one thousand one hundred feet below sea level. In the hot weather the Bedouins desert this low-lying country, which at all seasons of the year is depressing. However, later on we were to remain there many weeks in suffocating heat.

On February 22nd Colonel Henry and I motored down to the plain. On arriving at the foot of the hill we crossed the plain to the Dead Sea, a distance of six or seven miles. It is recorded that there is a strong indication in favour of locating Sodom and Gomorrah on this ground, as, according to the Biblical record, it was "full of slime pits." A more God-forsaken country it is difficult to conceive. As this reconnaissance to the north end of the Dead Sea was beyond the cavalry outpost line, our little Ford car bristled with weapons, but beyond occasional shots with rifles and revolvers at running partridges, which we failed to topple over, there was no rencontre, as we expected, with the Turk.

In the middle of the great plain stood a solitary square white monastery with a blue dome, Deir Hajleh. No other building existed in this solitude for miles. Two or three Greek monks lived there, patient, simple creatures, who would have cheerfully and hospitably received any passer-by were he Christian, Turk or Chinese.

A few weeks later this home of rest and prayer became the headquarters of an infantry brigade and a barracks for a battalion, so that its courts and galleries hummed with pleasant oaths from Whitechapel—a great change for the peaceful monks.

Eventually our little car, crawling through white slimy mud, reached the shingly beach of the Dead Sea. Here the scene was most desolate. Barkless strips of boughs and trunks lay about the shore ; little waves

lapped languidly upon the shingle, leaving a salt foam at the sea-edge. Nothing but sterility on all sides except, lying back from the beach, an occasional thicket of willow, tamarisk and oleander. The Dead Sea water is intensely salt, and no animal life could exist in it. To bathe in it is unpleasant, as the salt causes every portion of the body to tingle and produces the Dead Sea rash.

During the following days we made several reconnaissances in the valley in view of future operations in this direction. In a letter I wrote home at this time, whilst in this part of the world, I described roughly scenes which impressed me.

"Riding back one night in the mountains after a long day in the plains I passed troops marching to battle. It was moonlight. A kilted regiment swung through the pass—just men silently tramping along. And as they emerged from the dark hill shadows, the moonlight flashed on their steel helmets. For a background huge steep stony ridges, and further away a steel-blue sheet of water marked the Dead Sea. The colouring was simply perfect. I just held my breath with the thrill of it. Glints of light glanced off scabbard and helmet and the shadowy forms of their skirts. Tiny spots of flame high up on the hills above represented a camp or bivouac : the white road led away into the gloom."

#### HIGHLANDERS IN PALESTINE

Over the long, dark Moab Hills the white  
And silent Moon climbs up till Jordan's plain  
Lies clear below her, and she sees again  
Long lines of soldiers marching out to fight.

Down the steep, narrow pass as those of old  
These tramp with measured stride and flash of steel,  
Grim, ruthless envoys of the Last Appeal—  
No change in Man the changeless Hills behold.

Steel-blue the Dead Sea in the brilliant light,  
A white road stretches to the purple gloom  
Where countless hosts have vanished to their doom  
In all the glory of the Eastern night.

Sparkles on helm, and knee-short skirts that swing—  
Hast Time gone back ? Are these the men of Rome ?  
Does Alexander pass in triumph home ?  
Or kilted Israelites with spear and sling ?

Over and on they march, across the gleam  
Into the shadow-land, while far and still  
The white Moon touches river, plain and hill  
With all the magic of her age-long dream.

E. R. DAUNCEY.

Again another memory of the Judean hills. "Bright sunlight, women and children dressed in sacking or sometimes in brilliant colours : many Russian Jewish women, some quite old, all working—road mending. Wonderfully picturesque groups. Little baskets of stones on their heads : carrying or heaping stones alongside the dusty road. Men out of Bible pictures watching : Arabs in long flowing robes of white, some blue, some red : groaning camels, little donkeys carrying absurd weights. Here and there tall Sikhs mustering the working women and children, so poorly clad, the last, that one could scarcely call them clothes.

Round the bend of the long, endless road came a big car flying the Union Jack, an armoured car preceding this one as a guard to the Commander-in-Chief. Two or three more cars carrying the gilded staff followed the chiefs. The big Indian Sikh soldier came up to attention, saluted, and the cars passed on."

Next day I took a party of my own officers on reconnaissance. The following describes the day's work. A group of horsemen riding over a great plain—green grass in the low-lying wadi with pretty English wild-flowers growing alongside the clear-running stream. A shell bursts overhead. A second falls with a crash not very near, but near enough : horsemen move forward up the wadi in separate groups, then meet again. The horses are watered and left behind ; the party of dismounted officers walk forward not knowing what is ahead. There is no escort, and they are nearing the River Jordan. The wadi here breaks up into little hillocks. They strike a track and notice marks of enemy : still they go on. An iron bridge comes into view round the corner of a mound. Out come maps and field glasses. Then "ping," a bullet screams overhead. They go up on to the next rise and look over and make sure of their bearings. They are beyond any other British troops, within perhaps five hundred or six hundred yards of the Turk. They see the Turk just above the wadi. Quick calculations are made, roads or tracks—the bend of the river and other things vital to them are noted.

Crash goes another shell, this time too close to be pleasant, followed by three or four, one bursting immediately overhead, knocking up lumps of the dry mud. They walk up, find shelter in a little grass cove, fish out some food, sitting on the grass, all very hungry—cheese and biscuits and pieces of chocolate, whisky and water and cigarettes. Reconnaissance not yet over.

They must make quite sure on some points. Another walk forward.

Everyone at last satisfied : they have been seen and three or four shells burst round the little party. They get back to their horses, divide up in pairs, emerge from the river-bed, and ride at full gallop across the open plain and make for the long home journey back into the hills.

Several days were spent in this way in reconnoitring for artillery positions and in reconnaissance of the River Jordan between February 28th and March 6th.

On March 2nd, in order to cover the reconnaissance of the River Jordan by the infantry, I distributed sections of artillery on a broad front on the right bank of the river, and a 60-pounder battery also came under my orders. In addition I used two Turkish captured 75 mm. guns, besides part of my own Brigade, to worry the enemy's artillery, which had shown some activity during the reconnaissances of fords and the bridging of the Jordan.

I took the opportunity at this time to make personal reconnaissances with the cavalry.

By the 17th I had assembled my Brigade in the plain, and a large artillery camp was formed, including the divisional ammunition column of the 60th and 53rd Divisions, and I became commandant of this camp.

The camp lay in the valley at the foot of Jebel Kuruntul, the Hill of Temptation, a precipitous rock rising sheer up from the plain, overhanging a deep wadi. There were caves high up, and a monastery clung to the face of these rocks. A weird spot this, the traditional scene of our Lord's forty days' Fasting and Temptation.

On the 20th three enemy 'planes flew low over this camp, in which I had many hundreds of horses and mules, and dropped bombs and fired at us with machine guns. Total casualties, one mule shot through the buttock.

On the 21st my group of artillery consisted of a howitzer battery of the 302nd Brigade, a battery of 60-pounders, two mountain batteries and my own 303rd Brigade.

The crossing of the Jordan was made at the Market El Hajleh ford by the 180th Infantry Brigade under great difficulties and with much opposition in the early hours of the morning of the 21st. Market El Hajleh was the scene of the baptism of Christ.

The river here was about one hundred feet in breadth—swift running, which added to the difficulties of erecting a pontoon bridge under heavy fire, so that the infantry suffered heavy casualties.

On the 22nd three of my batteries were obliged to shift positions

under heavy shell fire. This was very well carried out, the shells falling amongst the teams as they drove up out of the wadi. Great coolness was shewn amongst the drivers, so that only three men were wounded.

On the morning of the 23rd I crossed the Jordan with a party of officers to reconnoitre for gun positions, and sent two mountain batteries across to support the 2/17th Londons, who held the high bank on the east of the river. By the night of the 23rd I had crossed batteries of artillery at Market El Hajleh and at Ghoranyieh. These two points were five miles apart.

Early on the morning of the 24th we received orders to advance in support of the 181st Infantry Brigade, with which we were now operating, the 179th Brigade co-operating on our left.

By 7 a.m. I had concentrated all my artillery at Ghoranyieh in preparation for this advance across the plain to the Moab hills beyond. The passage of the Jordan having been completed, the objective now was the Hedjaz railway, a strategical line running down the whole length of Palestine from Damascus to Maan and thence to Medina. At Amman the line approached the Jordan to within twenty-five miles, and here the Turks had constructed formidable defences covering the approaches to the railway station. There was a strong Turkish garrison at Maan and another at Medina. It was important to gain possession of Amman and isolate Maan and Medina from Damascus.

The Arab irregulars belonging to the army of the king of the Hedjaz, who were co-operating with us, were divided into two mobile forces—a southern force commanded by Sherif Abdulla, and a northern force under Sherif Feisal, the king's sons. Although these Arabs had on several occasions broken into the outer defences of Maan, the line was still open to Amman, where there was a large munition depot.

We were now to cross about six miles of open plain, which, commanded as it was by the hills on the east side of the valley, afforded no cover for artillery. The high ground, Tel el Musta El Haud, which protected the entrance to the mountains, formed our objective. I ordered two howitzer batteries and two mountain batteries to advance up the wadi Nimrin, and sent the remaining guns forward to positions of readiness, prepared to advance swiftly over the open grass plain.

Major Price, R.F.A., and Major Barry, R.F.A., both commanding howitzer batteries, did excellent work, each leading a section of guns right forward under heavy fire. Major Price fell severely wounded,

and Barry, although wounded in the shoulder, carried on, refusing to leave his guns. Our infantry stormed the heights of El Haud, covered by the fire of these batteries, and forced the Turks from this strong position.

Major Price, whom I recommended very strongly for exceptional services in the operations east of Jerusalem, was awarded the Military Cross. He had commanded a battery for over two years—an exceptional gunner and a brave officer. In Palestine up to date he had been in the firing line and had attended every fight. He had held the acting rank of Major for many months; nevertheless, having the misfortune to be wounded, he was reduced to the rank of subaltern. That an officer in the firing line fighting for his country should be reduced in rank and pay because, by sheer daring and pluck, he is wounded, is beyond anything comprehensible. Such injustice or, shall we say, oversight on the part of those responsible for his reduction in rank is unpardonable.

That night we entered the pass which led for eighteen miles through the mountains of Moab, and bivouacked a mile up the road towards our next objective, Es Salt.

At dawn on the 25th I took two mountain batteries in close support of the infantry up the pass, my two howitzer batteries following with eight-horsed teams. The 18-pounder batteries were not to enter the mountains, as it was not considered that they would be required owing to the flat trajectory of these guns.

Es Salt is situated about twenty-five miles from Ghoranyieh ford over Jordan, at a height of four thousand feet above the plain, which we had now left behind. A drizzling rain helped to increase the burden of our long uphill march. At 2 p.m., when within a few miles of our objective, the infantry, who had worked along the heights on either side of the road, were held up. One of the mountain batteries took exactly four minutes to get into action and commence shelling. I have never seen quicker work than that done by these two mule batteries, the 10th and 16th, in these operations. Under cover of the mountain batteries, the infantry again advanced, the long column crawling slowly up the road.

Owing to the wadi Sha'ib, through which deep gorge the mountain stream flowed, and to the precipitous cliffs on each side, it was not possible for the cavalry patrols to leave the road, so that they were entirely at the mercy of possible snipers on the hill-tops, which commanded the Es Salt approach. By 5 o'clock that evening the head of the column came again



A CROWD OF NATIVES FOLLOWED US UP THE LITTLE STREET OF ES SALT.



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into collision with the enemy, and the Anzac mounted patrols, owing to casualties to horses, could not push on.

The Brigadier-General requested two infantry officers to go up the road and reconnoitre on foot. I dismounted and accompanied these officers. We had not gone a hundred yards before we espied a group of about twelve riflemen high up in the rocks above the road. And as we looked they raised their rifles. We all leapt to the side of the road, the air singing with bullets. This was enough, and we sneaked back. Almost immediately there was another volley right into the little party, followed by the scream of a shell from a mountain gun. I mounted my horse, which was in front of the column, galloped back, and tumbled one of the mountain batteries into action, ordering up the remainder of my artillery into action to register the hills guarding Es Salt.

Soon it became dark, and we bivouacked by the side of the road for the night. In the meantime the Desert Mounted Corps had moved up the mountains on our right towards Amman, and on our left the 179th Infantry Brigade had ascended from the valley by a narrow and precipitous path.

Before daylight on March 25th advance troops of the 179th Brigade had entered Es Salt (reported to be the ancient Ramoth-Gilead). I rode into the town with Brig.-General Da Costa and our orderlies, and as we approached a crowd of natives followed us up the little street, firing guns and pistols close to our horses' heads as a *feu de joie*. I was not sure whether I enjoyed this or not, for a more desperate-looking party of Circassian buccaneers I had never so far encountered. However, we were met with friendly glances and all seemed well.

Later in the day the Divisional General, General Shea, commanding the 60th Division, arrived, and a formal entry was arranged. He rode one of my horses. General Robinson, commanding the artillery of the Division, also joined the procession, and rode with me. Robinson was a sound, cheery fellow, well liked by all ranks: a man to work for and to do one's best for, quiet, brave and unassuming, with the good manners which are second nature to an old Etonian. This old artilleryman, with a fine record of services in France and in Palestine, retired at the end of the War insufficiently recognized for valuable services.

While the operations at Es Salt had so far been successful, the Mounted Corps on its approach to Amman had encountered the enemy in great strength. The strong position there bristled with machine guns and light

artillery, and it was therefore decided to send on at once the 181st Infantry Brigade under Da Costa to the assistance of the Camel Corps.

On March 27th I was ordered to maintain my two howitzer batteries for the defence of Es Salt and despatch three mountain batteries (I had been reinforced by a third) to Amman, a distance of sixteen miles through the village of Siweili and El Fuheis.

In the meantime I sent out two officers' patrols towards Amman to reconnoitre the road leading thereto. Very excellent reports were brought in, stating amongst other details that the road was impossible for howitzers, but possible for 18-pounder batteries.

On the 28th enemy planes flew over the artillery camps, dropping bombs and killing Major Beck and Lieutenant Scott and desperately wounding Captain Weston.

General Humphreys, who had now assumed command of the defence of Es Salt, rode out with me and two battery commanders. We followed the steep track leading north-north-west from Es Salt and reached the high ground Neby Osh'a, another thousand feet up. Here we found the Anzac mounted patrols. The view from this high position is one of the most extensive and magnificent in the whole of Syria. The whole course of the Jordan, hundreds of feet below, from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee, could be clearly traced, its silvery waters gleaming in the sun. We could see the entire range of the West Palestine hills, from Hebron in the south to Upper Galilee in the north. And we could see enemy cavalry moving in the plain and two large Turkish camps below us.

Originally the operations were intended to be in the form of a raid by the Mounted Corps to cut the Amman-Damascus railway, which was to have been completed in two days. The Mounted Corps, however, failed to destroy the tunnel over the railway, so that infantry and artillery were sent to assist them in their withdrawal, and we were delayed longer in these mountains than it was ever intended.

The following days were a period of considerable anxiety. Our force in front of Es Salt was a very weak one, consisting of two depleted battalions, about five hundred rifles in all, and two batteries of 4.5-inch howitzers. It was a large perimeter, that could only be held by picketing hills and approaches to north-east, north and east of the town, with cavalry outposts watching our left flank.

We received vague rumours from natives throughout this time of enemy forces massing and Turkish cavalry marching in large numbers on Es Salt.

We were in great suspense for five days, as we knew that we must hang on to this place to cover the withdrawal of the Amman force. In the meantime our right flank was very exposed, and there was fear of being cut off from the 181st Brigade and of having our long line of communication cut, situated as we were up there in the enemy country.

However, with great difficulties, we hung on until March 31st. Two attempts on the 30th to rush our outpost line were frustrated. General Humphreys had strolled over to my bivvy, where my Adjutant, Thompson, and I had made a fire out there in the open with the rain pouring down. It was bitterly cold. Every moment we expected an attack. Humphreys said, "If they attack us we're in the soup." Thompson came up to me afterwards and asked if the little General was anxious as regards our position. I said, "No, not anxious, but just now he is preoccupied; I know he is preoccupied because he drank up my glass of whisky by mistake." Thompson was one of the best fellows possible—capable, always cheerful, and brimming over with dry humour; full of tact in his capacity of Adjutant; an ideal Staff Officer.

When it became dark we were able gradually to withdraw from the hills—a ticklish business. The evacuation of wounded, who had to be brought down the steep slopes on camels, was well carried out. As I rode down the hill that night, the one mountain road was choked with camels carrying wounded and with parties of straggling refugees, for the Christians of Es Salt took this opportunity to hurry out of the place.

Women, children, old men and donkeys piled up with furniture blocked up the way. Many were overtaken next day in their weary march down hill and killed by Turkish cavalry.

That night we reached the plain again and prepared to cover the withdrawal of the infantry to the line of the River Jordan, which was successfully accomplished soon after dark, all my artillery having to cross the river by one pontoon bridge.

The following message was received from the Corps Commander a few days later :—

"The G.O.C. wishes to thank all ranks for the very able manner in which recent operations have been carried out, and for the gallantry and endurance displayed under most adverse conditions. He has been asked by the Corps Commander to convey his sincere thanks and admiration to the Division. The marked efficiency and cheerful contempt of all

difficulties displayed by the R.E. and by the administrative services contributed in no small degree to the success of the operations.

The G.O.C. congratulates the whole Division on yet another splendid performance.

H. McCALL,

A.A. and Q.M.G. 60th Div."

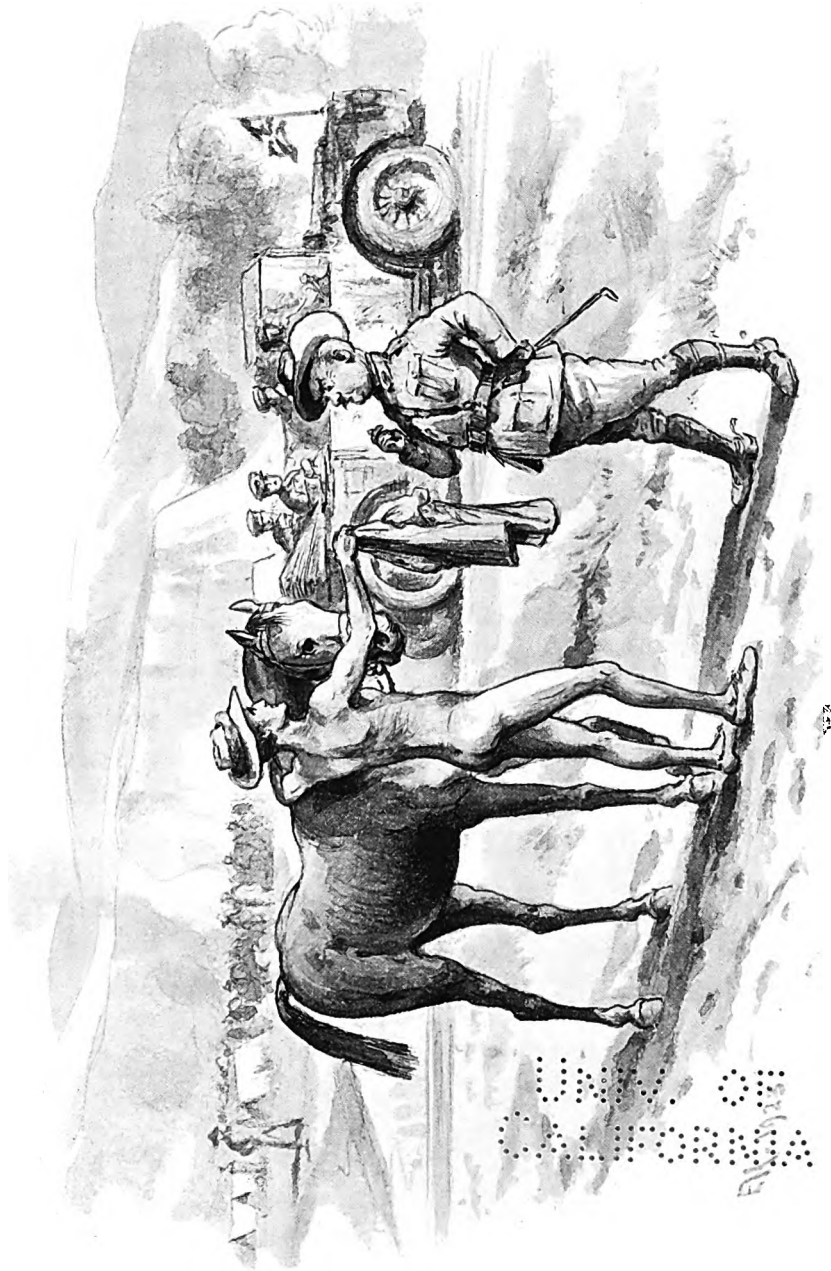
The Anzacs, to whom we were at times attached, were cheery fellows and most independent. Individually they were magnificent specimens of manhood. Off duty, many of them, in spite of the fierce sun, wore only "shorts," and rode about stripped of their shirts. One day General Allenby, who had issued an order prohibiting the wearing of "shorts" when mounted, drove down to the Jordan and saw a great hulking Anzac trooper stripped to the waist and in "shorts" riding his horse to water. At the Chief's order the trooper was promptly stopped by one of his own officers, a little perky fellow, no doubt an important frog in his own little puddle. He was roundly told off, with the Commander-in-Chief in his car near by, for having "shorts" on when mounted. The big Anzac, however, was completely unmoved by his "telling-off," and stripping off his only garment before the astonished officers, politely handed his "shorts" to the little officer, saying, "Very well then, take the d—things." Then, naked as he was born, except for a pair of shoes, he leapt on to his horse and rode on. I happened to witness this performance and was much tickled.

On April 3rd I was given command of the 302nd Brigade R.F.A., which was in position in the plain to cover the bridge-head at Ghoranyieh.

On the night of April 17/18th I recrossed the Jordan in command of the artillery to support a reconnaissance by the Anzac Mounted Division on Shunet Nimrin, in co-operation with the 18th Brigade R.H.A. 60-pounders and the 383rd Siege Battery 6-inch guns. This was satisfactorily carried out, and we withdrew to the right bank of the river on the night of the 19th/20th.

It had now become very hot, and the flies were a plague. Dead camels lay unburied in the plain, the result of hostile air-bombing, when sixty or seventy camels would be killed at a time.

The bridge-head at Ghoranyieh was put in a state of defence and was strongly held by us on the east bank. The Turks made several attacks in this direction, and finally on the 29th April it was resolved, for political



"VERY WELL THEN, TAKE THE DAMNED THINGS."

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reasons, to again attack the enemy at Shunet Nimrin and once more send a force up into the mountains to the east of the River Jordan.

Therefore, for the third time, I concentrated my artillery on the left bank of the river preparatory to an attack on the Makkar-Durbasi-Shunet Nimrin-Bilibeil position, in support of the 180th Infantry Brigade, which was now very much depleted in numbers and worn out with constant marching and many months' fighting. The 179th would again co-operate on our left. I had under my orders, in addition to my own Brigade, a battery of horse artillery and a 3.7 mountain howitzer. A feature of these operations was the exceptional work done by the forward artillery officers under very difficult circumstances. It was as much as the infantry could do to hold the enemy to his position, and had it not been for the skill of the battery commanders, in conjunction with their forward officers, this operation, undertaken by tired-out officers and men, might have ended seriously.

At one point an infantry company gave ground, and young Bridgeman, an artillery officer who had been shelled and shot at for the best part of two days, was nearly surrounded by the Turks, isolated as he was with one signaller right up in a front line sangar. Nevertheless he crawled back down the steep hill, rallied forty men, and with shouts of "Follow the artillery," himself leading, recaptured and held the lost trenches. Geoffrey Bridgeman had already been awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous bravery at the taking of Jerusalem, when he brought a wounded comrade in under close fire, afterwards riding back and leading his section of guns right forward in the teeth of the fight. Good work for a boy of nineteen.

All through these operations we were given the very greatest help and consideration by the afore-mentioned General Robinson, C.R.A., 60th Division, and his staff. Imbert Terry, the General's Staff Officer, worked admirably. Terry was continually dealing with officers of infantry, some of them showing almost complete ignorance of artillery questions. Nevertheless he used a firm hand with all the tactful manner with which he was so well provided.

The 180th Infantry Brigade had gallantly carried out all required of them up to date, but they were obliged to recross the river, after fighting a superior force for five days on end. During this time all my batteries were registered and shelled by hostile guns. We had bombarded the enemy position constantly during this period, but our infantry were not



strong enough to storm the heights, protected as they were by innumerable machine guns, and manned by a considerable force. So for the time being, until fresh troops could be sent, we were to be content with holding the river line. On the night of April 31st and May 1st we again found ourselves in action on the banks of the Jordan.

On May 15th I fell sick as the result of the climate in the river-bed and was given a week's leave to Alexandria. There I sustained an accident, and was given three weeks' leave to England, and eventually found myself back in France in command of a Brigade in the 46th Division.

In Palestine I had great admiration for the battery commanders who served under me. No difficulty was too great for them, and at times the operations, owing to climate, difficulties of transport, difficulties of road, etc., called for considerable skill and ability on the part of all my officers and men, who never failed to help me with their courage and, above all, their cheerfulness.

## GERMANY, 1920

" Though the heel of the strong oppressor  
May grind the weak in the dust.  
And the voices of fame, with one acclaim  
May call him great and just.  
Let those who applaud take warning  
And keep this motto in sight,  
No question is ever settled  
Until it is settled right."

E. W. WILCOX.

**A**FTER the signing of the Armistice I was sent to Germany as a member of the Inter-Allied Commission of Control.

I visited the British, French and American centres of occupation. My duties took me to Dresden and Munich, which towns in turn became my headquarters for some months, and to Berlin very frequently for interviews and conferences.

My work carried me all over Bavaria and Saxony; my play-time to Vienna, Buda Pesth and Czecho-Slavakia.

Up to date, except for occasional interviews with German prisoners in the War, my experience of the Teuton had been confined to a series of German governesses in my early boyhood, who in succession were named the Yellow Dwarf, the Gnat, and Cross-eyed Susan, and came under the heading of "nasty."

They were not popular with my brother and myself when at the ages of seven and four respectively, and were returned early to their native land.

So that it was a pleasant surprise to find that the German in his own country had many good points.

The self-discipline and love of Fatherland were curiously consistent throughout this federal country.

Prussians must, however, be excluded from the above remarks; a Prussian is in a category of his own which is unspeakable, and, although

their arrogance had naturally taken root here and there outside the confines of Prussia, I cannot say that I met with any incivility all the period of eleven months in Germany.

I cannot say that the British were altogether well represented by the officers selected to serve on the Inter-allied Military Commission.

A few, on the other hand, spread their good influence.

One or two of the senior officers were distinctly unpopular, which did not add to the success of the mission.

France had sent some of her best officers to carry out the important work which required extreme tact, intelligence and knowledge of the German language, and these gifts the French, almost without exception, were blessed with.

In the year I was in Germany I covered many hundreds of miles of country by rail and car, and came into contact with men of every class and variety. My duties carried me to numberless military centres, where I interviewed officers of every rank, Russian prisoners of war, camps, etc., etc., myself dressed in British uniform, bearding general officers, often of the highest rank, in their "holy of holies," to be met invariably with courtesy.

That is a wonderful thing to say. After four and a half years of bitter warring with a crafty, bloodthirsty opponent, still in his own mind unconquered, I found myself treated with deference and desire of friendship.

On the "Fourth" of June, 1920, Lord Kilbarnock, who became Chargé d'Affaires on resumption of diplomatic relations with Germany, entertained us with an Old Etonian dinner at the Embassy in Berlin, at which about fifteen were present.

Later in the evening we adjourned to the very lovely ballroom for which the British Embassy is famous, where full-length portraits of our Sovereigns, past and present, adorn the walls, each picture reaching from floor to ceiling, and including Queen Victoria as a young woman, King Edward VII, Queen Alexandra, looking very lovely, and our present Gracious Majesties, all of which hung there unscathed through the hostile years of war.

The ballroom was crowded with diplomats, soldiers and sailors of very many countries.

Later on in Munich a brother officer and I gave a reception and dance,

at which were present members of the different Consulates in that town, officers of the Inter-allied Commission, Italian, French, British and Belgian, with their wives.

There were a few Germans present of both sexes well known in that city.

An egg-and-spoon race, in which at least eight or ten different nationalities competed, afforded great merriment. I think the Czecho-Slovak Consul and a very beautiful Italian lady won the prizes.

## CONCLUSION

**W**HAT can the reader learn from a story of happenings in this War such as the above ?

Very little, I think, beyond the fact that it adds one more tale of blood and misery for which this Armageddon is responsible ; one more warning perhaps for us to ward off as far as it is humanly possible another war for the youngsters who follow in our steps.

No disarmed nation can avoid another catastrophe ; only those who are themselves strong can dictate Peace ; therefore let us be prepared on sea and land to hold our own and so be in a position to preach that gospel amongst nations.

A weakly armed nation of undrilled and decadent males cannot with any hope of success preach this gospel.

Common sense dictates this fact, and no kindly advice from a well-intentioned League of Nations will alter the laws of nature.

“ To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.”

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

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